Christianity indeed

OR,

The well-disciplin'd Christian the Delight of Christ.

SHEWING,

How Believers in Christ ought to go in and out each before other in Gospel-Order; Governing, and being Governed, as the children of one Father.

By *Fr. Stanley.*

Phil. 4. 8. *Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; If there be any vertue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

Chap. 1. 27. *Onely let your Conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, &c.*

LONDON, Printed for *Francis Smith* at the Elephant and Castle without *Temple-bar*.

[667]

LIBRARY OF UNION
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY,
NEW YORK.
GIFT FROM
DAVID H. McALPIN.

To the most worthy my well beloved, and dear Relations in the Lord, of the Congregational Churches, both Officers and Members; whom I humbly crave to Patronize this small and mean Treatise, for whose sake I chiefly formed it, and for whose benefit I now present it. For whom I can do no less but wish all increase of Grace, and fulness of Peace; and as a further Duty and Obligation, to pray and intercede for your Perfection.

My Beloved and Christian Friends,

IT *is the holy Scriptures commendation, That it's written for every Mans Instruction, and as there is a mystery of Godliness and Piety, so there is a mystery of Sin and Iniquity; and as there are Mines of Heavenly Treasure, so there are Minerals of Tin and Clay: Now Many are so wrapt in darkness in the depth of Impiety, and others busied in labouring in the Earth for Clay, that they have not hitherto discovered the Celestial and hidden Mysteries, nor found out the Spiritual Mines of Divine Treasures; which precious things cannot be discovered unless by Gods holy Spirit a Man be inspired*

by Divine light a Man muſt come to diſcern everlaſting Mines and Myſteries, and by the eternal Spirit, which ſearcheth the hidden and moſt ſecret things; And as theſe are not Matters of Indifferency or Temporary, ſo they are to be ſought with more than ordinary diligence and induſtry; and for our better guidance, and more ſure direction, we muſt make uſe of the helps of Divine Inſpiration. I can do no leſſe but call upon all Chriſtian Profeſſors to betake themſelves to the Canonical Books of the holy Scriptures; For among all other Benefits and Benedictions, we are to bleſs God for thoſe holy Writings; for they are the beſt helps, that are helps in the beſt things; And as a Mapp directs both to Town and Country, ſo doth holy Writ diſcover the Borders and Treaſures of the Heavenly and Holy City; indeed they are like a light to our feet, and a lanthorn to our paths, to guide us aright in all Gods pure and holy wayes, and to the finding out of the moſt choyce and invaluable Riches, far better to the Saints than Pearls and Jewels; for they are more than a Library for Inſtruction, like a Store-houſe for Soul-proviſion, and like a Spiritual Armorie for Munition, where is to be found all manner of heavenly Food for Nutriment, and all kinde of holy Garments for Ornament; I may ſay, 'tis like an Apotheries ſhop for Receipts and Remedies, even the moſt ſoveraign helps againſt all in troubles and diſeaſes; ſuch Minerals will make Potions for Soul-ſick Patients, which being

being skilfully compounded, and carefully applied, may prove effectual Means and powerfull Remedies to expel and drive away most dangerous Distempers. From hence Christians may be directed and provided with Skill and right Judgement, and principled and furnished with Rules for all Order, Discipline and Government, whether it be within the Dominion of Congregational, Personal, or Family Jurisdiction. Besides this, a Man may collect and form an Evidence in order to the claiming an Interest to the everlasting Inheritance. To be be short, here is all variety of Soul-concernment and Contentment towards the fitting a Mans self, clearing his Assurance for his Eternal Preferment; We may say of the Holy Scriptures in Resolution, as once was said in answer to Circumcision, That they are profitable every way, even to such as order their Lives according to them, have both the promise of this life, and that which is to come. Now as the Sun goes his course, and gives light in his place, and every Star in his order gives some light in his course: So ought every Christian to be a light in his day, with respect to order and place; and as a Member of the Mystical Body I would cast a Mite into the Publick Treasurie; and as one of the unworthy Successors of our antient Fathers, who sent their Epistles to the Believing Churches, I have now an Occasion as well as a Pattern to present something to Christs Congregation: Or any Well-wishers who see any thing worth of acceptation,

that may deserve the place of Counsel or Direction, wherein they may see themselves concerned in Conscience, and ingaged in Duties to conform thereunto, according to Scripture-obligations: Now because a Paper-direction may be received, where a Mans Person will be refused; and a Matter printed may be imbraced, where a Sermon cannot be preached; and because the greatest things have the smallest beginnings, and the Lord hath ordained strength out of the mouth of Babes and Sucklings, are moving Causes of my entering upon this Work; and so I commit this small Labour to be perused and proved consonant to the prime Rules of Christianity, and the pure Principles of Charity, and so to receive its approbation or correction. Now if this little Mite be by any accepted and imbraced, if any by it be instructed and profited, the Author hath his End, and is well recompenced and satisfied.

Brethren, This is the first of my looking towards the Press, I hope I shall have an Allowance from you more or less, where I have failed in Method or Circumstance, I hope you will blot it out of your Remembrance.

THE

THE

Preface, or Premonition, presented to the Reader, ſerious Conſideration or Meditation.

Chriſtian, Courteous, and Impartial Reader,

AS the worth and loſs of Heaven can neither be imagined or valued, ſo the dreadfull and perpetuall torments of Hell can neither be meaſured nor reported: To deſign the obtaining of the one, and to endeavour to eſcape the other, is the great task and ſpeciall care of every Goſpell-profeſſor; and in order to theſe things, as it is the Chriſtian mans wiſdome to ask counſell of God and his holy writings, ſo 'tis alſo his diſcretion to have an eye to his preſent diſpenſations. We have lived to be eye and ear-witneſſes to hear and behold Gods eminent hand, both in reſpect of judge-

1 Chron. 12. 32

ments and mercies, wherein his fatherly care hath been famously and affectionately discovered, by the soul-provisions he hath made for us, and his princely respect hath been eminently demonstrated, by the constant protection and speciall security he hath given us; who hath also attended and alarmed us by loud calls, by happy instruments, miraculous mercies, and admonished us by fearfull apparitions, particular accidents, and dreadfull judgements, all doubtless to provoke to duty, and that we might have a childs part in the present mercy, to escape the present severity, to avoid the future misery, and to preserve and conduct us to the haven of Eternity. The Lords princely favours and acts of indempnity and compassion, have been marvelously commended to us, in his great patience, long-suffering, and forbearance of us, yet preserving our priviledges, enlarging our liberties, augmenting our graces, and that while others have fallen by calamities. Nay have not many cause, the whole term of their lives, to remember how eminently they have been preserved from the sword, pestilence, and as brands pulled out of the fire. It becomes us as obedient Children, and concerns us as loyall Subjects, to give ear and humbly submit to the Lords voice, whether by mercies or threatnings, warning or corrections.

Christian

Chriſtian Reader, we are admoniſhed by this diſpenſation, to hear the rod of correction, and to conſider who appoints it. Is there any evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it; 'tis more than propheſied, for many have already both known and felt what it is for a jealous God, to come down out of his place, and to ſhew his angry face in his hot diſpleaſure: For proof, let the Citizens eſpecially remember, who live in the Metropolitan City, whom I might call to witneſs if need did require, to tell their experience of Gods late Method in the peſtilence and fire; and if we needed any further teſtimony, to ask the Sea-men concerning the ſword devouring in the Sea. It doth therefore properly and more than ordinarily concern every Chriſtian, to be ſtrict in attention, and ſpeedy in obſervation, and ſtudy to learn what the Lord ſpeaks to us in this preſent diſpenſation, before the Lord pour out the remainder of his wrath upon the children of men. For among whom is there ſuch a reformation, that might give us juſt ground to believe, the righteous God will ſtay his hand of deſtroying; only he is long-ſuffering, ſurely to ſee what uſe will be made of the laſt Viſitation. Let us therefore ſtudy the point and ſtate the queſtion, what ſutable ſacrifice we ſhould prepare for, and *Amos* 3. 6.

and preſent to the God of Heaven, that might be as fruit in its ſeaſon from us, and acceptably received and reſented by him; for certainly our treſpaſſes are aggravated, by not improving our mercies we have enjoyed.

Doubtleſs the abuſe of mercies is the door that lets in all our miſeries: There is therefore nothing more incumbent upon us, than thankfully to improve our bleſſings, and remove far from us that which procures Gods diſpleaſures, and to prize our unexpected and undeſerved favours and freedomes, and ſenſibly to acknowledge our precious immunities and benefits in the uſe of them, that we may never know their price and loſs in the want of them, for ſins commited againſt benefits received, and that in the midſt of calamities, which for ſeaſon and circumſtance are no leſs than miracles and wonders, which being not prized thankfully, we may expect ſeverity to take place in the room of mercy. For truly ſuch have been the eminent appearances of God, the nature, number, and meaſure of our priviledges, who hath by his moſt admirable and remarkable acts of power, and his more inviſible and ſecret way of providence, defended and ſecured his poor heritage, not only when the multitude have ſtood for us, but ſince they have turned their force againſt us: So that he that turned aſide as *Moſes*,

ſes, may ſee a great ſight to be admired, to ſee as it were the Buſh to burn, and yet not conſumed; ingratitude for ſuch experiences without doubt will return in great ſeverities. Let us therefore conſult our knowledge, and recollect our memories, caſt up accounts, render unto the Lord his due, in returning praiſes, and chearfully acknowledge our debts, and ſpeedily pay our vows, that we may be counted worthy to be the Lords Tenants, that we may ſtill hold our benefits, and poſſeſs our priviledges.

For if in theſe things Chriſtians are found in neglects and ſecurity, they may expect to find the Lord in wrath and fury. For the Lord hath made our famous City, the beauty and glory of our Nation, to be as a Beacon to alarm the Countrey, and to give them warning: He might have made us preſidents of warning to others, but 'tis our priviledge to make others examples of warning to us. Let not us be like ſome who cry out of certain perſons, ſad accidents, and complain of bad times, and yet put the cauſe of all theſe things from themſelves, not pondering nor reflecting upon the matter, that 'tis our deſerts, we deſerve no better. There is no ſort or ſect of men the righteous God hath ſpared in this ſad Viſitation, then, which is the people that are to be exempted in

the

the reformation. Now that our mercy may not be turned into miſeries, and our chaſtiſements into judgements, Reader, let it be the next queſtion, what the Lord requires in duty to be done; the reſolution may be taken out of that ſhort Breviate of *Micah* the Prophet, the ſumme of which duty conſiſts in juſtice, mercy, and humility; for this is to hear the rod, to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God: For indeed this is the work of our day, and theſe are the weightier matters of Gods Law; and as Eccleſiaſticall Government and true diſcipline is a prime part of Religion, ſo 'tis a proper work to purge Chriſts Congregation; and becauſe our holy God hath a quick and ſtrict eye upon his own people, and his jealouſie is hotteſt about the Altar, Ark, and Sanctuary, witneſs the ſeverity of his juſtice upon *Nadab*, and *Abihu*, *Corah*, *Uzzah*, and *Ely*. Alſo remember the ſtate of the Church of the *Corinthians*, which may be a Mapp and glaſs for Chriſtians in theſe late times, wherein we may diſcover our miſdemeanours, the nature of our calamities, and a method for our remedies, who ſuffered becauſe the Church was not purged, and becauſe they preſumed

Mic. 6. 9.

Lev. 10. 2.

Numb. 16. 32.

preſumed to be Communicants at the Lords Table, and did not diſcern the Lords Body, but came unworthily, and kept their Communions irreverently and diſorderly, inſomuch (for this cauſe) the Lord inflicts upon them, weakneſs, ſickneſs, and mortality. 1 *Cor.* 11. 30. So that it firſt and moſt concerns the Church of God to ſet a-foot this materiall duty, even the exerciſe of juſtice, mercy, and humility, and impartially to judge our ſelves, that we may not be judged of the Lord, nor condemned with the world, but haſten to put judgement into execution, to cleanſe our Camps, purge our Tabernacles, and Churches, both from our own and other mens ſins, both Nationall, Congregationall, Family, and Perſonall crimes; for true Government hath this commendation, by its execution it orders, purges, and eſtabliſhes Chriſts Congregation: Thus runs the duty of a Chriſtian, fervently to ſerve the Lord, applying themſelves to the time and occaſion. And further Chriſtian Reader, the righteous God hath not only admoniſhed us to do our duty, but hath given us a method by his late example, to proceed againſt iniquity. 1. He counſells and inſtructs by many inſtruments, much tenderneſs, and oft entreaties. 2. He doth admoniſh and wait to be gracious, and that with long-ſuffering

ing, and much patience. 3. He warns, alarms by particular presidents of his anger, sad accidents, and threatens by fearfull sights and apparitions. 4. If yet they reform not, he sends as we see his rod and sword, and cuts off many persons, and makes great desolations. Thus saith *Micah* the Prophet, *The Lord hath shewed thee O man what is good*, which being done with an eye to the present condition, might prove a soveraign means to prevent or remove future tribulation.

But Christian Reader, for my own part and pattern, I look at the example of the Apostle *Paul* to the *Corinthian*-Congregation; when he saw their disorder and impiety, their affliction and calamity, he magnifies his authority, and discharges his duty, observing the Lords own method; after counsell and warning he seems to threaten with his rod, and presses the Church to purge themselves, by punishing evil doers, and reforming their abuses: And lest the Church should question their power and priviledge in the execution of judgement and justice, he convinces them the Saints shall judge the world and Angels, much more then those smaller matters, and that they should judge upon life and death, much more things that pertain to this present life. And that he might put it out of all disputation, he saith, set them to

judge

judge in the Church who are of the leaſt eſtimation; and further he ſaith, 'tis a ſhame for Chriſtians to go out of the Church to try their Cauſes; ſo that I have both an occaſion and a pattern to write thus to Chriſts Congregation. That which is moſt called for is right diſcipline, and that thing is the moſt of all wanting, by which our Borders and Churches ſhould be cleanſed of all defilements and pollutions. Theſe things conſidered; 1. May be forceable Arguments to induce Chriſtians to exerciſe a more ſearching doctrine, and to execute a more ſevere diſcipline, and that in every place and Congregation. 2. My obſervation of the Goſpell-Churches: Some are careleſs in matters of doctrine; ſome faulty in caſes of converſation; but more generally remiſs in the true order of Governing. 3. Some looking upon Church-Government to be little leſs than tyranny, and their ſubmiſſion to it little leſs than ſlavery. 4. Others looking upon it, as if it had no name, being, or place, or as if it ſtood for no purpoſe and uſe. 5. Becauſe ſuch neglects and generall omiſſions, open a door to let in many diſorders and diviſions. And becauſe I do not remember that any Friend hath writ much upon this Subject before, are the motives of my enlarging upon this Work. I confeſs this Subject is too high and too worthy to be handled by

one

one ſo unworthy, and of ſo mean ability; yet I would open a door to let ſome other in to view this Subject, even to lend their help to ſupply my defects, and make it more perfect; even one that hath faith in the honeſty of my intention, and to cover my failings by a charitable conſtruction. And ſo I commit it to the uſe of Edification, and alſo preſent it for the benefit of Chriſts Congregation.

A TREATISE,

Setting forth

The Gospel's Honour,

AND

The Churches Ornament.

IN all Nations, Provinces, and in every Society, there are two principal Causes of Peace and common Prosperity, where Superiours freely exercise right Government, and Inferiours are truly subject, and obedient; Even when Vertue and well-doers are suitably praised, and constantly protected; and all Vice and evill-doers truly restrained, and duly punished: When the

People are in reall submission to Authority and the Rulers in humble submission to the Power of those Laws they ought to rule by: Even when Government is prosecuted without knowing of Faces, and Justice executed without regard to Causes, or respects of Persons. And as the most High and Mighty God is the Worlds Creator, so Government is his Royall Act and Excellent Creature; and for it's Eminency, 'tis as antient as the World for Antiquity. For when the Lord had devided the Darkness from the Light, He made the Sun to rule by Day, and the Moon by Night: So when the Most Gracious Lord hath called and devided the Children of Light from the Children of this World, and Translated them out of the Kingdome of Darknesse into the Kingdome of his dear Son, and so they become his Spiritual Subjects, and He their Immortal King. Thus am I directed into my way, and cast upon my designed Subject; which is my reall Purpose and resolved Intent, even to treat touching Christ's Princely Authority, and Ecclesiastical Government, which I call, *The Gospel's Honour*, and, *The Churches Ornament*; And for my better prosecution of this Matter, I will observe this following Method and Order.

1. To

1. To ſhew the Antiquity and Dignity of Eccleſiaſtical Government.

2. The Definition, The ſeveral Parts and particular Acts of it.

3. The ſeveral Reaſons for it, and great Neceſſity of it.

4. Declaring the Uſe and great Benefit that comes by it.

5. Some Rules tendred, directing how to Effect and Accompliſh it.

6. The true Order and right Manner of the Execution of it.

7. And Laſtly, Some Directions given, how to uphold and ſupport it.

---

1. Of the Firſt;

Touching the Antiquity and Dignity of Eccleſiaſtical Government.

THe Excellency, Antiquity, and Dignity of all Power and Authority conferred upon the Goſpel-Church, deſcends from the Chriſt of God, who is the Original Author, and from whom it receives it's prime Honour. We may ſay in this caſe as 'tis ſaid by the Wiſe Man, *For what can the man do that cometh after the King? Even that which hath*

hath been already done; who now under the New Testament is the only Law-giver, and chief Establisher of Ecclesiastical Government: all Power in Heaven and Earth is given him, and all Justice and Judgement is committed to him, and all subordinate Power is derived from him; His Personal Excellencies and Princely Vertues are not to be compared but admired. I have not words to expresse his Royall Majesty, and to set forth his Excellent Glory: He is exalted far above all Principalities, and far surpasseth all Names and Dignities; for the God-Head dwels in him bodily, and he is more than worthy of all Duty and Glory; His Love unparalel'd, his Wisdome matchless, his Power boundlesse, his Justice unquestionable, his Innocency admirable, his Treasures inestimable, his Fidelity inexpressable, *Imanuel*; God with us, and who is Exalted above, and triumphs over all his Enemies. The most High and Mighty Prince, upon whom he fals he grinds to powder, and crushes his Adversaries by his Power, and breaks them in pieces like Potters vessels; who acted so eminently for the Glory of the Creator, and so happily for the happinesse of the Creature, that Divine Justice might be compleatly satisfied, and Mercy towards man admirably advanced:

advanced: He that thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, hath freely humbled himself to death, to drink of a bitter Cup, and to bear the Creatures burdens; Even he shall have the Government upon his shoulders.

The Glory that attends him, further appears by those *Excellent Appellations attributed to him: His Name shall be called the wonderfull Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, by whom Princes Reign, and Judges decree justice*: who upholds all things by the word of his Power, and is able to destroy all things in his wrath and anger: He is the great Judge of quick and dead, both of this New and the Old World; and shall pronounce the last and eternal Sentence of the everlasting Absolution and eternal Condemnation, and that Consonant to every mans known and secret action; who hath overcome the World and the power of the Devill; having the victory, keeps the Keys of Death and Hell; who is all-sufficient to protect and secure such as worship him, and to restrain and destroy such as fight against him; from Sea to Sea is his Dominion; the utmost parts of the Earth is his possession. The absolute Soveraign of all Nations, the Universal Governour over

all Persons and Countries; he is the *Alpha*, and *Omega*; all people are commanded and bound to honour him; every knee shall bow, and every tongue confesse him; his Laws are Spiritual, Righteous and Merciful; all his requirements are perfect and pure; and all his promises are security, certain and sure. This is the Immortal King of Saints, who in his times will shew who is the blessed and only Potentate King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; I say he is the chiefest among Ten Thousands: First, In respect of Personal Beauty, for he is altogether lovely. Secondly, In respect of Purity, without either blemish or spot of Iniquity. Thirdly, In respect of Charity, casting his love upon a lost World found in Impurity. Fourthly, In respect of Policy, who knows the most secret Conspiracy, and catcheth the wise in their own subtilty. Fifthly, In respect of Propriety, who makes many Poor Rich out of his full Treasury. Sixthly, In respect of Soveraignty, who in the most eminent dangers can hide and keep securely. Seventhly, In respect of Perpetuity, who can bestow Rewards of never ending Glory. The same is head over all things to his Church, and Lord over all to the Conscience. We must all appear before him, be judged by

by him, and every one must give an account of himself to him: he only can prescribe Rules for the Soul and Conscience; who gives life and grace, and none but he can take it away; who keeps the keys of these privities, and opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens. He only knows the inward affections, the omissions and submissions of the heart to his Requirements. Heart-Iniquity is out of mans view to take notice, and out of the reach of mortal man to punish. The Lord only can reward with everlasting Preferment, and none but he can inflict eternal punishment. This is the Saints great Prophet, High Priest, and Eternal King, who hath of his own free will and donation bequeathed a subordinate power to his People and Congregation; committing to them a great trust, and conferring upon them a great honour; saying, *Whatsoever ye bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven; Whose sins ye remit shall be remitted, and whose sins ye retain shall be retained*: and as a further Demonstration of dignifying them, he hath been pleased to impart some of his Communicable Titles to them; and that they of his Eldership (in his absence) should serve under him, and act for him, in

the Offices of Prophet, Priest and King, in a far inferiour and subordinate sence and low degree; acting by his Authority, and yet with an humble respect and great humility in his service; who ought to be honourably attended with all holy obedience, in all humbleness, and with all due Reverence and Thankfulnesse: Representing his Person, Acting all in his Name, by vertue of the Power and Commission committed to them. Thus he lends them his Names, sets them in his Room, gives them the keys of the Kingdome, puts his Image upon them, and hath committed the charge of his People, the care of his Laws, and the exercise of Government to them; and when the last day Judgement shall be called, the Saints shall be returned as Jurors, upon Life and Death, to judge the World. And as Prayer and Preaching holds forth his Prophetical and Priestly Office, so right Government holds forth his Princely Office and Dignity of his Place.

2. *True Church Government defined, and the several Parts and particular Acts distinguished.*

NOw right Church Government under the Power of Christ, according to the Rules of the New Testament, inflicts no bodily punishment; but is a just exercising and due executing of all his Righteous and Spirituall Laws in being; consonant to his Council and direction given, without knowing Interest, delay of Justice, respect to persons, wresting Causes either for favor or prejudice to any degree of persons; for we have but one Law for the same Offence, which knows no face, nor regards no Circumstance.

2. Church Government consists of these several parts, *viz.* Governours, Inferiours, Laws, and Execution. Or thus, A People truly called, and rightly gathered, Officers fitly qualifi'd, and orderly Ordained, Christ's Laws exactly minded, and carefully preserved, every man's Cause timely heard, and Justice duly executed. The true constitution and right governing of Christ's Congregation may be further inlarged and demonstrated thus: 1. Where the People are really converted,

converted. 2. Where they are legally and wholly separated. 3. Who for Truths sake suffer, if persecuted. 4. Where the Word is truly preached. 5. Where the People are truly formed, and Duties orderly observed. 6. Where the Ordinances and Sacraments are purely administred. 7. And true Discipline duly ordered.

3. The more particular Acts of Ecclesiastical Government, according to the Primitive pattern, and Christ's appointment, is, That the Minister or Governour is ingaged and stands obliged to watch over each Member in love; duely instructing them, going before them, praying for them, to be an example to them, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith & Purity; To teach the Ignorant, to strengthen the Weak, to comfort the Feeble minded, succour the Tempted, incourage the Faint-hearted, restore the Fallen, admonish the Negligent, visit the Sick, defend them from Deceivers, seek up the Wanderers and Strayers, reprove idle and busie bodies, warn the Unruly, correct Tale-bearers and Back-biters, sharply reprove Disturbers and Division-makers, openly rebuke publick Offenders, imbrace penitent Persons, reject Hereticks, exclude Contemners and obstinate Persons, absolve the truly humbled Trespas-

sors,

ſors, hear the Cauſes of Complainers, examine Witneſſes, hear the defence of the Defendants, reſpecting the Poor mans Cauſe as well as the Rich, admoniſhing with compaſſion, re-admoniſhing and reproving with Long-ſuffering and Doctrine, waiting with patience the reſtoring offenders. Not to keep company, but refuſe to aſſociate with ſuch perſons which are Excommunicate, alwayes obſerving the Tempers of Perſons, the nature of Offences, and ſeaſonable times; ſome ſave with fear, and ſome with compaſſion, ſome with ſoftneſſe, and others with ſharpneſſe; let all be done in Juſtice and Charity, without demurs, delays, or partiality; let all be done freely and in order, without exerciſing Lordſhip, or having reſpect to Lucre; but to adde to their performance of duty themſelves patterns of Order, Humility and Piety. Thus I have ſhewed in part what that Ancient, Spiritual, Apoſtolical Government is: which being rightly ordered, and truely execu ed, will anſwer to my firſt Intent, and amount to the aforeſaid Account, even to hold forth Chriſt's Glory, *the Goſpel's Honour, and the Churches Ornament.*

3. *The*

3. *The Reasons for, and necessity of Church Governors and Governments.*

1. BEcause Christ's Congregation is a Spiritual Common-wealth, and holy Nation; where Spiritual Traffique is free, where Gifts, Graces, and Priviledges are common. It consists of Spiritual Fathers, Children, Young men, and strong men, and hath many Cities, much Treasures, and many Enemies. Now Order and Government is the strength of a Nation, and as walls to a City, to preserve heavenly Treasure from the Spiritual Enemy: all which bespeak the need the Church hath of Officers and Governors; for indeed what is a Church, Family, or Nation, without Government, but disorder and confusion. If the glorious Sun should retire his light, and stay his course, and the Moon and Stars forbear their shining in the way of their Circuit and place, which the Lord hath appointed Rulers over day and night, Times and Seasons, Light and Darkness would fall together; then all would be in a disorderly

Ephes. 2. 12. 1 *Pet.* 2. 9.

orderly confuſed mixture. So in truth take away Governours and Government from the Church of Chriſt, and ye take away the Prop and Pillar of this Spiritual Structure, and lay aſide it's Inſtrumental Defence and Security; and ſo lay it open to be taken and carried Captive by the Spiritual Adverſary. In all which appears the Reaſon and Neceſſity.

2. The Church of Chriſt is an Eccleſiaſtical Court, or Spiritual Chancery, where all proceedings are to be Con-
Pſal. 65. 4. *Pſal.* 84. 2. and 10. ſonant to the prime Rules of Juſtice, and pure Principles of Equity and Charity: where all offences and injuries committed, and all Offices, and Duties neglected are to be examined and determined, according to that ancient Law, *Of doing as man would be done by.* Now how can Matters in a Court be Regulated and Executed without Orders and Officers: Therefore our Soveraign Lord hath Commiſſionated his Miniſters to be as Judgers and Stewards, impowered by him, to Act for him in his ſtead and abſence, to hold forth the Majeſty of his Preſence, by Perſonating him, Repreſenting his Authority, and holding forth his Glory, in reſpect of Dignity, Mercy, Purity and Severity,

Severity, precisely to look to his Rights and Priviledges, Dues and Duties, and to inflict due punishments upon all Offenders, and against all Offences; To have an eye to his Spiritual Rolls, and Holy Writings; and in the exercise of Government, to produce Commissions from the Lord, and give some charge, according as Gods Spirit hath given charge in the Word: and so all things to be done justly without partiality.

3. Christ's Church is a Church Militant, and must manage a Warfare with the Prince of this World, the Old Serpent, who is the most grand Politician, and cruell Enemy; whose design is chiefly against the Spiritual Generation, and Holy City; who joyns in league with the World, the lusts of the flesh, and all wicked Instruments, & is furnished with fiery darts, strong snares, subtill wiles, and secret policy, to invade the borders, and betray the souls of such as professe Christianity, indeavouring to divide them from the Armour and Weapons of the Word, and to disarm them of their defence by the spiritual sword; sometimes in fury storming the Castle of our bodies, to rob us of the Treasure of our souls: even to steal away our spiritual Evidence,

1 *Tim.* 1. 18. *Ephes.* 6. 11, 13.

to

to deprive us of our everlasting Inheritance. Is not here Reason enough to shew the necessity of being provided with all Spirituall Artillery, and to exercise all Christian policy to put our selves into best Postures, and holy Orders; furnished with all Officers, and the exactest Discipline and Formality, with courage and constancy to maintain the cause of Religion and Piety, with diligence and sobriety, and with great watchfulnesse and fidelity.

4. The Church of God is fitly compared to a Vineyard, which is to be separated from other ground, *Mat.* 20. 1. which is to be choisely Planted, timely Watered, duly Pruned, and well Fenced. *1 Cor.* 9. 7. Now Christ's Ministers are Planters, Waterers and Pruners; and Government is as the Fence to the Churches. It's good to see the Vine when it flourishes; but let it alone, and in a short time it will ruine it self by superfluous Branches: Even so for want of Spiritual Vinedressers, Decays and Ruines suddenly befall flourishing Churches. The Lord hath therefore appointed Labourers in his Vineyard, to dresse it and secure it. This similitude teacheth us that things will soon be at a loss in Christ's Vineyard, unless there be some

some Governour to over-see it, order and preserve it; which shewes the Reason for it, and Necessity of it.

5. The People of God are compared to a Flock of Sheep, and Lambs; and wicked men to Foxes, and devouring Wolves. *Acts* 20. 28, 29. *Joh.* 21. 15. 16. Now Christians are too much like sheep, in respect of careless feeding, and without fear of devouring; sheep will feed in such unwholsome Pastures without guides, that instead of feeding, they infect themselves, to the loss of their lives; besides where there is no Shepheard to lead and defend them, then comes the Wolves and Foxes and scatters and worries them. We may say by sad experience we have known the same among Christians: all which Conditions and Expressions manifest clearly there is a Necessity of Pastors and Shepherds in Christ's Congregation, to watch over them, feed them, govern them, and defend them from all such destructive Creatures as seek to devour them.

6. Because the Saints are fitly compared to Merchant-men, and the Voyage of Christianity to a Ship passing through the Sea; their Traffick and Merchandice is the *Mat.* 13. 45. Treasures

Treasures of Knowledge, Gifts and Graces; Themselves are like Merchant-Venturers; the Wicked like the troubled-Sea; the Saints hope, an Anchor; the broken in Faith, to Ship-wrack. Now how should the Ships be guided in the Seas without Pilats and Governors, because of the force of Storms and Tempest, the violence of the Waves, and roughnesse of the Waters, and the great difficulty of getting to Harbours. Now a good Minister and Governour is like a skilfull Pilot, that takes the shortest and safest Course; who foresees Dangers, and so orders his Affairs, that Rocks may be avoided, and Shipwrack prevented, all Pirats defeated, and the Ship and her Treasure secured. This also adds and confirms, that the weighty Concerns of a Church, had need to be well-Manned, and to have skilfull men appointed, and to have all things well ordered and governed, having all means of safety that can be had, and all Instrumental helps that may be afforded.

1 Tim. 1. 19. *Isa.* 51. 20.

7. That a Congregation of Christians may be compared to so many Patients, who are always liable to spiritual diseases, to be

Jer. 8. 21, 22.

taken with several Distempers, and to fal into divers Temptations, & sometimes into desperate Consumptive diseases, either Luke-warmnesse, Coldnes, Remisnes, Unfruitfulnes, or unthankfulnes, and the like; and are also subject to be infected with the Contagious Plague of sin, and to be corrupted with the leaven of unsound Doctrine. Now Christ's Ministers are or ought to be like good Physitians, First to know the Nature of the Patient's distemper, then sort and prepare the Medicines, and so apply the means, with respect to the Tempers, Capacities, and Conditions of the Patients; and to give sutable Receits for all Diseases, for preventing, curing; to give Potions and Cordials for Purging, Preserving and Comforting them; and for want of Skilfulnes and Faithfulnesse in Soul-Physitians, so many poor Christian Patients fall into dangerous Relapses and spirituall Consumptions; and for want of good Discipline and carefull Governours, so many Societies run into such sad Divisions and great Disorders. Thus I have offered these several particulars in Argument, to manifest the Reasons for, and the Necessity of Church Government.

Heb. 12. 12, 13.

4. *The*

4. *The good use and great benefit that comes by Right Government.*

1. IT is or ought to be the First and Prime Design of every Christian Professor to contrive and consult the advancement of Christs Honour, which way, and by what means they may best and most exalt the Dignity, and hold forth the Excellency of his Name, and by what Instrumental helps they may Principally Represent his Princely Fame, in other Duties we perform to him; but in Matters of Government and Discipline, we more properly Act for him, Represent him, and help him, and bring home the most Praise and Glory to him. For we can in nothing more promote his Honour, then in the true execution of Government among such as professe the Gospell. It returns the Lord increase of Glory, and renders him his own with Usury. It encourages and praises Well-doers to be more Zealous and Fruitfull in their Actual Obedience, and it punishes Evill-doers: and so the Lord reaps the Honour of his Justice; and by this way and means the Lord will *Mat.* 6. 33. *Col.* 1. 18.

receive his Honour from all Persons, Actually by the godly Professor, and Passively by evill Transgressor. And this is to rule for God, being always consonant to the Rule and Circumstance of his Word.

2. As the true Exercise of Ecclesiastical Government is Christ's advancement; so 'tis *The Gospels Honour, & the Churches Ornament.* It requires all Persons to their duties in their several and respective places, and admonishes all Christians to a more Orderly, Reverent, and Serious Deportment in Gods holy Worship and Service. It sets all things in their right places, and puts all things to their proper uses, to be done Decently and in Order, according to the true manner and direct Methods of Matter, Form and Circumstance required in Gods Service: and things thus performed in Christs Congregation, promotes the Truths Credit, and the Believers Reputation; and having their own true form, they carry a Beauty with them: and like the order in *Solomon's* House, it will invite strangers to see it, and affect such as behold it. One Argument is, why many inquiring souls stand off at such distances, Because they see no affecting beauty in Christs Churches.

Tit. 2.10. 1 *Pet.* 3. 45.

3. As

3. As Right Government casts out Disorders and disorderly walkers, so it rejoyceth godly Professors, *Col.* 2. 5. and preserves Believers Rights and Priviledges, and ministers just ground of joy, more especially to such as labour in the Ministry, to behold the peoples order and fidelity; and as a grave and holy life credits the Christian Profession, so true Discipline honours the Gospel-Doctrine; and the constant Exercise thereof is of such eminent tendency, that good people rejoyce when Just men are in Authority: *Pro.* 29. 2. For a Rulers Insufficiency proves the Nocents Incouragement, and the Innocents calamity. For St. *Paul* reckons himself Renowned in the Churches stedfast and orderly walkings; he rejoyces to behold it in the *Colossians*, and takes occasion to commend it, and to praise them for it; and counts it his Joy, Honour, and Crown.

4. Order and Right Governing stands in direct opposition to all disorder and confusion. 'Tis like Light opposed to Darkness, Strength opposed to Weakness, Beauty opposed to Deformity. It reforms Disorders, and orders Duties; It exalts any People, and establishes Churches, and

ſtands as it were always furniſht and ready armed againſt the body of Sin and the deeds of the Old man: even the deſtructive enemy that would diſturb the Saints peace, and inſlave their ſouls in miſery: It's natural to Juſtice to oppoſe and ſuppreſs Impiety: and 'tis it's proper work to praiſe Godlineſſe and diſperſe iniquity; It cleanſes Tabernacles, it purges Congregations, preſerves Priviledges, removes Reproaches, it juſtifies the Innocent, it condemns the Guilty, it corrects the Offender, and puniſhes the Oppreſſor, relieves the Diſtreſſed, and ſets free the oppreſſed, and is a ſoveraign Remedy to acquit our ſelves of other mens Iniquity.

1 *Cor.* 5. 7.

5. As the exerciſe of Government is deſtructive to iniquity and impurity; ſo it is a Protection to Godlineſſe and Piety; It gives opportunity and liberty for the free exerciſe of Gifts and Graces, and the improvement of ſpiritual Abilities, and maintains a conſtant Entercourſe of Heavenly Traffick & Commerce within the Borders of their Dominion; to the intent things may thrive and flouriſh within the Holy

1 *Cor.* 5. 5.

1 *Cor.* 14. 31.

1 *Pet.* 4. 10.

Holy Nation. Government is a defence to tender Plants in Christs Congregation: It gives countenance and a guarding presence to the Seeds and Roots of Grace and Piety; and gives protection to the increase of godlinesse, and defence and security to the growth of Christianity. Therefore the Lord hath honored his Ministers with some of his own Appellations, that they should imitate and honour him in their several Offices and respective places; that they should endeavour under him to preserve his People in all their freedomes and liberties, and to demean themselves in his absence with all tenderness and kindnesse to the least of his Servants: Not quenching the smoaking Flax, nor breaking the bruised Reed, but cherishing and nourishing the Babes in Christ; giving a Guard to every weak faith, being alwayes free to direct them, and a ready assistance in all matters of Faith and Conscience.

6. I say 'tis weighty upon the Churches Concerment to maintain good Order, true Discipline, and Right Government. It is the most effectual means and soveraign help (under God) against the grand Enemy of our Souls, who hath fiery darts 2 Cor. 2. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

and makes desperate Attempts, and sets his Ambushments, and with policy and cruelty designs against the Saints to betray them by secret insinuation, or to fright them out of their Faith and Profession, and to weaken their hands for Christian Resolution; to break their bands of Union and Charity, and to cut the cords of Love and Unity; endeavouring to disorder them by sowing Discord among them. First, to divide them, to make way for an advantage to destroy them. Now Order is the Life and Strength of any Cause, and the most advantage to any People: for when a People are freely united and well Disciplined, it is the greatest offence and dread to the enemy; So 'tis when Christians have faith in Gods promises, and keep order in his Services, it tends to their safety and security. When the Souldiers are disordered the Victory is hazarded; and he's no good Christian-souldier that observes not Place and Order.

Prov. 6. 19.

7. Right Government, which consist Principally in the execution of Justice and Judgement, It may have the same commendation as was once given to Circumcision; for 'tis usefull and beneficial every way;

Isa. 32. 1. *Isa.* 6. 7.

way; and when Persons shall see it in it's Beauty, and how it brings in profit, and themselves being partakers of the benefit of it. It will ingage and oblige the hearts of those that live under it, peaceably and chearfully to conform themselves to it, and not only to approve of it, but in their several Duties and Respective Places with Freedome and Affection help to preserve and support it. For God himself is the Author of it, the Holy Ghost appoints overseer of it, God dwels with it, and will certainly blesse it: for in truth Order duly kept, and Government truly ordered, is of that Fame & Glory it would invite strangers out of the Country; As once the Order and Fame of *Solomon's* House, invited the Queen of *Sheba*. If our Spiritual *Solomon*'s House were but wisely governed, and the things therein rightly ordered, and all Matters and Manners prudently managed, and all Discipline truly executed, Strangers would be more invited, dissenting friends and differing perswasions would be more ingaged, and Christs Church more Renowned. Thus I have shewed in part the benefit that comes to Christ's Church by means of Ecclesiastical Government.

5. *Some*

5. *Some Rules tendred how to Effect and Accomplish a right Government.*

THe First thing that I shall propound unto the Church, in order to this great end is, Their choise of Officers; and herein to bespeak and exhort them that they neglect not their duty and care, and so the blame to lye at their door. None of the Saints and Brotherhood ought to consult for private Interest, but for a general and publick good; that whosoever among them the Lord hath suitably gifted, and fitly qualifi'd for the conversion of sinners, the constituting of Churches, and the well being, and better governing of Christ's Congregations; they stand bound in duty legally to elect and orderly to appoint such to the work of the Ministry; even to Separate and Ordain them according to their several Parts and Abilities to more general and particular places, even to follow the Lord, to put them into such places as he hath gifted for that purpose: Even such who come orderly into, and are tutered and brought up in the School of Christs Church, and learning there, untill they

Acts 13. 3.

they come to good degrees of Knowledge; rightly qualified and considerably gifted by Gods Spirit: amongst such some are to be freely Elected by the Church, and Ordained by Fasting and Prayer, and laying on of hands by the Eldership; such so Ordained and abiding Faithful we own as Ministers of the Gospell; and let them first be proved whether they have such qualifications as the holy Scriptures gives directions. This being a principall case towards the obtaining right Government; Take therefore advice of both old and New Testament; ye may please so far to view *Moses* Counsel in the Old Testament, as to see what kind of Persons was then chosen to be Rulers; Provide, saith he, *Wise men, Understanding men, and known men in your Tribes; Men of courage, men fearing God, men of truth and hating Coveteousness*: I offer this of *Moses*, not so much for Rule, as for the good agreement it bears with the Rules of the New Testament. But give heed to St. *Pauls* Counsell in the general qualifications mentioned & Recorded for our directions; which the Apostle sets down both Negative and affirmative. First, What they must not be; *Not soon angry, not given to Wine, no Striker;*

1 *Tim.* 3. 8. *Tit.* 1. &c.

striker; not self-willed, not a brawler, not covetous, not a Novice. Secondly, What they must be; *Blameless, one that rules well his own house, apt to teach, a lover of good men, sober, just, temperate,* holding fast the faithfull Word as he hath been taught; that they may improve and convince Gain-sayers; and if it can be obtained, let them have the Principles of Order, and spirit of Government, in and about this great Office and Duty. We are to look at a mans personal sufficiency, the Gravity of his Yoke-fellow, the Fidelity of his Posterity, and also the good report of his Neighbour-hood and Country. For if we would have Church-Government rightly ordered, there must be suitable Governours and fit Instruments to accomplish it.

These Rules that follow, touching this point, are chiefly imposed upon the Eldership;

By *Election, Direction, Protection, Supplication* and *Exclusion.*

2. By *Election*; As there is a great charge lies upon Churches, concerning the Election of Officers, So there is a special care lies upon Officers, touching the receiving and admitting

Mat. 3. 8.

ting Members into the Congregation. To ſee ſome Fruits of Repentance, Regeneration renewed in the ſpirit of the mind, born again; for ye know Churches under the Goſpell are not gathered by Generation, but by Regeneration, *Joh.* 3. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdome of Heaven.* 5, 6. For if they have not the birth of New Creatures, how can we expect the life of well ordered Chriſtians, that they ſhould naturally learn the true Doctrine, and really obſerve, and duly ſubmit to the true methods of Diſcipline, which ſo much concerns and adorneth every Goſpel Congregation. Every one had need underſtand Gods Ordinances and their own Duties, and to be able to demonſtrate ſomething of the authority, Matter, Manner, and End of every Principle and practice; For Ignorance is the Mother of much miſchief; for ſome by their behaviours diſcover and alſo their Actions determine, that they never paſt the new birth. Neither is their deſcent from Heaven; for they act and walk as not becoming the Royall Family, and ſuch as pertain to the Heavenly Poſterity; For many act ſo unnatural towards the Lord, as if he was never 2 *Cor.* 5. 17.

their

their Father, and so untaught in his word and Oracles, that they are no whit like his Disciples and Scholars; neither respecting Principles nor Orders, and some are already departed; being never well grounded, nor really and truly converted.

3. By *Direction*; By a due and seasonable instructing and directing such as are admitted into Membership, to acquaint and educate them in the knowledge of God, and the Affairs of the Gospel; & to learn them to know the Principles of Order & true Forms of Government, which are to be exercis'd under the New Testament: to keep close to the direct Rules of Discipline, and right orders of Governing, and to beget in them a Respect and Honour to the Truth, with all it's Oracles, and it's due Circumstances, and to second and seal this with a holy and well ordered, and a right governed Conversation; admonishing them to observe the true Methods of proceedings towards all differing, dissenting, weak, faln, and offending Brethren: To admonish the offending Brother timely before sin hath hardened him. Secondly, If it be a private Offence, to tell him of it privately between thee and him alone, which

2 *Tim.* 4.2.

Mat. 18.15.

is

is the ready way to gain him. Thirdly, To do it in Charity, wherein a man moſt reſembles the God of Piety. Fourthly, the end muſt be to reſtore the ſinner, but to deſtroy his iniquity; alwayes remembring them to perform duty that relates to each other, with Compaſſion and Piety, as children of the Father of Mercy; Even conſonant to their Heavenly Parentage & Spiritual Pedegree, of the Select number, choſen Generation, Royall Prieſt-hood, peculiar People & holy Nation; like men of the new Creation, & ſuch as are redeem'd from a vain Converſation; being as dead men to ſin, & buried with Chriſt in Baptiſme, & riſen with him to Newneſs of life, & ſo to exerciſe a ſpiritual Dominion, and give no place or ſubjection unto Sathan; but to endeavor to raign over the body of fleſh and ſin. But alas how oft is this general and known Rule abuſed and broken, wanting Charity to the perſon offending, or Fidelity to the Rule directing. The truth is, much of the Churches grief and care, breaks in among them at this door; but let Chriſts Miniſters lead and guide the Members into Rules of Piety, and Orders of Decency, and to ſecond their Exhortation by going before them as a pattern, and by good Counſel and by good Example to eſtabliſh the *Be*lievers

in

in Doctrine Discipline, and other Gospell orders,

4. By impartial Admonition and due Correction; for as the Scripture saith in another case, in a Church-sence, we may say in this, that Christ's Rulers bear not the spiritual sword in vain, but to turn the edge of the Word against all vice & iniquity, and to be a defence to all acts of Vertue and Piety; waiting all approaches, & watching all designs of Sathan, and all motions and appearances of the flesh. For many times the greatest disturbances are brought about by the least beginnings: for 'tis Sathans policy to carry on his designs by entring them in by the smallest appearances. Beware therefore of the works of the Flesh, as Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, and the like, which war against the Soul; which actings cause breaches and disorders: unto which, Officers and Over-seers are to have a fore-sight of preventing, and a ready hand of suppressing such things as disturb the peace of the Churches, and break orders; without regard to Causes, or respect to Person, by a diligent and severe hand against all Tale-bearers,

2 *Tim.* 3. 16.
1 *Thes.* 5. 12.
Gal. 5. 20.

bearers; Evill ſurmiſers, Back-biters, Rule-breakers, Deviſion-makers, ſecret Cenſurers, and private Judges of others, who in their Court of Confuſion condemn their Brethren, and caſt them upon their Reputation. Theſe and ſuch like are all Diſquieters of Churches, Wounders and Underminers of Governments; and for the better diſcovering and removing all-ſuch diſturbances, let all diligence be exerciſed, all Circumſtances of Reprehenſion and Correction, be truly obſerved, and all ſuch offenders timely reſtrained and duly puniſhed.

5. By Countenancing and Proteſting good orders, and giving incouragement to orderly Walkers. *Pſal.* 15. 4. To look with a ſowre face upon evill doers, and a ſevere countenance againſt Evill workers; but to honour the Pious and to praiſe the truly Religious, to cheriſh them in their Duties, and incourage them in Gods ſervices. Now Goſpel-order is not only Beautiful and Honourable, but acceptable to God and profitable to men: for the Lord himſelf is Author of it, and his Peoples experience prove the great benefit by it. Let the Lords Overſeers approve themſelves prevalent inſtruments to effect and keep *1 Cor.* 14.

good Government, & by good Exhortation and Provocation study to maintain good order. For the Lord strictly charges & precisely enjoyns Order in all his Services and Sacrifices, Typical and Ceremonial. more especially then in the Worship and Service of the Gospel; where Duties are more rarely blessed, and Defaults more sorely punished. Let Rulers know their places and do their Offices, even cherish good people, promote good Causes, to assist good Consciences, and to endeavour to preserve Christians in their Liberties and Priviledges, suitng and sorting their Counsels and Instructions, observing and taking advantages of seasons, and the Peoples conditions; improving all abilities, and the best faculties to defend them from deceivers; giving timely admonition to Church-disturbers. Succour the Tempted, incourage the Faint-hearted, to take off yoaks and remove oppressions that may lye upon mens consciences, watching diligently over them, carefully to govern them, gently leading such as be with young, to keep them from decaying, to support them from fainting, to restore them from erring, and like good Shepherds to feed and rule them, to defend and secure them from all those Foxes and Wolves that seek to scatter them,

and

and endeavour to deſtroy them.

6. By ſincere and fervent Supplication and Prayer, becauſe all things are ſanctified by the Word and Prayer; a duty never out of date, but in ſeaſon, and more eſpecially upon ſuch weighty Concernments and eminent occaſions: as the elections of Officers, the admiſſion of Members, and in the great duties of Direction, Correction, Protection and Excluſion. To acknowledge Gods grace to be the efficient Cauſe in all ſuch Matters, and to beg his Bleſſing upon all endeavours, without which all labour is nothing: pray to be directed aright to uſe the means, and then pray that the means may be ſanctified, may be ſucceſſeful and effectual, praying and waiting upon the great Counſellor, the prime Director, and God of Order, that he would be graciouſly pleaſed to give Governing Principles to right gathered Churches, and he would pleaſe ſo far to own and honour them, as to beſtow upon them the precious gifts of Diſcerning, Diſcretion, and Moderation towards all Perſons, upon all occaſions, and in all conditions; and more particular for the Spirit of Judgement and the ſpirit of Government: to order, eſta-

1 *Tim.* 4. 5. *Phi.* 4. 6. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 17.

bliſh and govern the Lords own People and Congregation, and to be found in the Faithfull diſcharge of their great duty of exerciſing Juſtice, Mercy and Humility, and to adorn the Churches with Juſt and Righteous Proceedings. That the Lords Name may be honoured, the Church rightly governed, the Truth renowned; that the fame of true Order may be more Proclaimed and further ſpread, that Strangers to it may be invited, Well-wiſhers may be engaged, Enemies may be prevented, and the Lords Faithfull Servants may ever be encouraged and reſolved.

7. By *Excluſion*, according to the Rule of Purging, putting out, cutting off, or Excommunication. Not always bearing & forbearing ſuch as are common and impenitent Treſpaſſers, after prayers made, and other Chriſtian means Religiouſly and indifferently uſed and improved, and a conſiderable time and ſpace hath been waited and delayed, and yet all Counſells and Reproofs are refuſed and rejected; Then to proceed gradually according to the Rule in that caſe provided, and to ſee that Diſcipline be rightly performed, and Juſtice duly executed, without knowing of Faces or regarding

1 *Cor.* 5. 13. *Gal.* 5. 12.

ing Causes. For sin is infectious, and a disease very dangerous and contagious. If humane Wisedome teacheth us to separate our selves from infected bodies, places, and garments for the safety of the outward man; much more doth spiritual discretion admonish us, and bespeak us to separate our selves from spirituall corruptions, and to exclude from us corrupted professors, defiled, polluted, impenitent Persons, which so nearly relate to Soul matters, and so muchrespects Immortal things *Jos.* 7. 11. *For a little Leaven, leaveneth the whole lump, The whole Camp of Israel stand charged for one Achan, and the Church of Corinth for one Incestuous person.* Cor. 5. 2. Though Justice be shoulder-work and a hard duty, yet 'tis better cut off a member then destroy the body. Let all such proceeding be attended with the face of Authority, the garments of Humility, and with arms of Mercy, with Patience and Compassion; designing to save the sinner, by endeavouring to destroy his transgression. So let the Church purge themselves of their own and other mens sins, by calling offendors into question, and putting Christ's laws into execution. Thus I have tendred my judgement in order to obtain Right Government.

Concerning Christians as they stand related to civil Magistrates.

NOw no man can be a good Governour, unlesse he first knows the place and service of an Inferiour; 'Tis therefore needfull for us to know our standing and relation, and what's required of us in respect of subjection, as we are men and members of a Nation, and to be truly informed how we become concerned in duty, as we are placed in a politick body. We are taught by the holy Scriptures to know *that there is no power but of God, and whosoever resists the power, resists the Ordinance of God.* Rom. 13. 12. 3, 4, 5. From thence we are instructed what the Magistrates Office is, even to punish evill doers, and to be a praise to them that do well: So also by the authority of the same Scriptures and holy writings, we are commanded and injoyned to be subject to civill powers in civill things, and that under the penalty of condign punishments: not only for wrath, but for conscience sake; and we ought to obey not for fear of vengeance, but because of a good conscience. 'Tis also matter of conscience

conſcience to obey good and profitable laws wherein our ſubmiſſion may tend to the civill peace of our Country and Nation, *and to give to Caſar that which is Caſars, and to God that which is Gods.* 'Tis therefore our burthen to hear our ſelves miſreported, as if we were no well wiſhers to National Government, when as we look upon good Governours and good Government to be as great an external Priviledge and Bleſſing as any other in the World; and whereas the Lord knows we look upon our ſelves directed by the holy Scriptures, and obliged by Goſpel Rules *to be in ſubjection to the higher Powers, to obey Magiſtrates, and to ſubmit our ſelves to every Ordinance of man for the Lords ſake* (in the ſence aforeſaid) *and not to revile them, or ſpeak evill of them, or to imagine evill in our hearts againſt them*; For there is a tongue & heart-murderer, as well as an eye and heart-Adulterer; but to ſtudy to know our Places & Duties, as we are Inferiours, and therein to diſcharge our conſciences, as we are Chriſtians, even to yield ſubmiſſion to them, and to pray for them, that we may lead a peaceable and godly life under them; *Mat.* 22. 21. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. 1 *Tim.* 2. 11.

believing there ought to be Civil Magistrates in all Nations, and always rendring unto our Governours their due in tribute, and alwayes reserving and rendring unto God his due in worship.

Concerning some Rules that respect and relate to Christian Families.

THe Rules which I have already tendered and freely offered to Christ's Congregation, may be usefull in every Family, and to every Christian; which method is by *Election*, *Direction*, *Correction*, *Protection*, *Supplication*, *Exclusion* and *Execution*; And because I will take in that which may be a good Second, and a special Assistant to this prime part of Religion, even Ecclesiasticall Government, I will humbly tender the aforesaid Rules to believing Families, but especially to the Heads and Overseers, to look upon their several Obligations, that respect their several duties and respective places. For when the Lord had created Man and Woman, he was pleased to appoint Order and Government betwixt them. I would therefore urge

Gen. 3.16.

the

the Argument of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Set thy House in order because of Mortality, that ye may be prepared when ye are called to dye.* *Isa.*38.1.

1. By *Election*, In making choise and placing your affections upon Vertuous and Religious Yoak-fellows in the Conjugall bond of Wives and Husbands; That may be suitable and meet helps, not only in respect of the concerns of the World, but more especially in the matters of God; for such are the best helps that are helps in the best things. Let them therefore *Num.*36. 6 that are or may be in that capacity, first look for Piety, Gravity, and Fidelity; for such bring good portions and great blessings with them into a Family. I could be severe against some Professors, who offend in this case, and give such great offences to others, who for Worldly Interest, run into such unequal and unmeet Marriages, and others, that rather covet to be equal or above in respect of Temporal portion, than to be united in one in matters of Faith and Religion. Let Masters 1 *Cor.*7.39.
make choise of such Servants as *Ps.*101.6.
truly fear the Lord; for how
should a man expect Gods Service should be promoted, and good order observed, when a man

man ſhall take ſuch perſons into his Family, as are ſtrangers to the Rule of Truth and Verity.

2. By *Direction*, By inſtructing and directing them in the knowledge of the way and fear of the Lord, teaching his *Deut.* 6. 7. Laws and Oracles unto them, begetting in them an affection and Reverence to his Will and Word, acquainting them with the bleſſings promiſed upon the believing and obeying Gods Requirements, and the dangers threatned againſt neglectors, and the dreadfull Judgements that fall upon deſpiſers of Gods worſhip and orders. Let the Heads and Governours of this little Church or Kingdome (as I may call it) exerciſe the Office in an humble ſence of Prophet, Prieſt, and King; to teach them, to offer Sacrifice for them, and to govern them. Let believing Parents give their children Goſpel-breeding, and ſpiritual Education, that they may know how to behave themſelves in the Houſhold of God as becomes the Family of ſo Princely a Poſterity, and to learn the carriage of holy manners, and preciſely to prove all things like the *Bareans*, who by ſo doing, may be reputed truly Noble and well bred Chriſtians. I would reſpectively impoſe upon ſuperiors

periors to take the place of Tutors, and their houſes to be as Nurceries of Learning, there to be inſtructed and prepared even to fit them to Degrees of Piety and Religion: and for this take the Counſell of *Solomon*, who ſaith, *Train up a Child in the way he ſhould go, and he will not depart from it when he is old*: Mark, he ſaith *he will not depart*. Mind what Saint *Paul* ſaith, *Bring up your Children in the Lords nurture and admonition, and ſo to endeavour by good Counſel and good example to incline their hearts and conform their minds to ſound Doctrine, Goſpel-order, and a holy converſation, and ſo come to be made capable of ſpiritual Priviledges and Church-Communion.* *Prov.* 22. 6. *Eph.* 6. 4.

3. By *Correction*, By diſcountenancing, Correcting, Preventing and Reſtraining of ſin, to prevent and reform them from vanity and vice by the reproof of a ſevere countenance and angry face, and to ſtop their growing into folly, and the bringing forth evill action, by rectifying all diſorders in their converſation, and this to be done timely and in due ſeaſon, agreeable to the beſt Rules of diſcretion, have a reſpect to their diſpoſition; ſome to gain by fear, *Prov.* 23. 13. *Prov.* 13. 14.

fear, and some by favour. Let the Circumstances observed in *Correction* give evidence for a mans self, his end is good in Correcting. I have heard at the common place of Execution, some complaining of Fathers, and others of Masters, because they did not restrain them from vain Courses; saying, if they had, it might have been a prevention of their ever coming to that shamefull Execution: And indeed God hath set Fathers and Masters, as Rulers, and to have dominion within the borders of their Family, Jurisdiction, and doubtlesse of their places they must give an account; Therefore they have great reason to discharge their trust to their Inferiours, and to make use of their power and advantages, which are many, they having so much opportunity to discern into their actions, and to discover their lives, and to know their designs; and having so near a relation to them, and so great a command over them might be much instrumental (by Gods blessing) to do much for God, and for their souls benefit and eternal good.

4. By *Protection*, By Countenancing and Cherishing the budding of grace, & nourishing every appearance of God in the soul, giving timely incouragement and a seasonable assistance

1 Cor. 11. 2.

ſtance to the matters of Faith and Conſcience, and to be a guarding preſence to the ſmall beginning; not to quench the ſmoaking Flax and bruiſed Reed, to mind them of ſpiritual Traffick, and to bring them up in the knowledge of ſpiritual Husbandry; protecting in them the heads of Grace and plants of Piety; uſing much diligence, waiting with tenderneſſe their growth and increaſe; For as the School-men ſay, *The greateſt Matters have the ſmalleſt Beginnings.* The Seeds and Roots of Grace and Piety are like the tender Herbs and Plants that have need to be tenderly preſerved, to be often watered and weeded, and well fenced and ſecured. For a man is a Prince in his own Family, to protect Order and Piety, and to baniſh Sin and Iniquity; and having caſt out the things that offend, and well prepared the ground, the next thing is to put things into ſome Method, Form and Order. And here the Chriſtian profeſſor may learn a Leſſon of the Gardener, who in his Plantation and Garden, having gotten the choiſeſt Hearbs and Plants, he deviſes his form, and ſets them according to rule and order, both for profit, and alſo to delight the owner: So Chriſtians, when they have prepared Matter, they

1 *Theſ.* 2. 7.

are

are to place them in the Lords Vineyard, and that in a Gospel manner, that they may be fruitfull for their Lord and Master; and also to invite and delight the beholder to take them with Orders beauty: for it was the Order of *Solomons* Family that astonisht the Queen of *Sheba*.

5. By *Supplication*, For Family and Children; always remembering the Lord is the Donor and Bestower of all Gifts and Graces, and that we are but poor begging Instruments at the Throne of Grace, and Door of Mercy for our selves and Families, praying humbly and heartily that the Lord would please to Sanctifie all means, and Crown all endeavours with his own benedictions; without which all other labours are nothing; for without him we can do nothing: fervently petitioning the Lord that our Families might be his Family, that he would direct and bless us in our *Election*, *Direction*, *Correction*, *Protection* & *Exclusion*; And that our Children might be his Children, and our Servants his Servants; that the Lord would please to season their hearts with his Grace, enlighten their understanding by his *Spirit*, to ingage their affections by his Love, and so to prepare them and conform them to his Will and Word;

Joh. 15.5. —

That

That with *Joshua*, *We and our Houses may serve the Lord*; *Jos.* 24. 15. That as they grow in years and strength, so they may increase in Knowledge and Goodnesse, that they might be Plants in his House, and placed in his Family, and so be fruitfull Instruments of his Glory, and humbly to offer Sacrifice for them, and to intercede the Lord, that they might orderly obey his Doctrine, and cheerfully submit to his Discipline, and to intreat his favour to guide them by his Counsell here, and receive them into his Kingdome hereafter.

6. By *Exclusion*; Yet here I do not intend in the least to meddle with Wife and Children, no more than to purge sin out of them; but in this case I mind only Servants, Busie-bodies and Tale-bearers, which are oft-times Instruments of Disorder and Disturbance in many Families; *Deut.* 19. 16. And as the Wise man saith, *Where there is no wood the Fire goeth out*; So where there is no Tale-bearer, Strife ceaseth. *Prov.* 26. 20. And for Servants that are vain & disorderly, may in time infect and corrupt the rest in a Family. Now 'tis better to remove and exclude such persons, than that they should defile and pol-

lute

lute many others, that ye may keep Discipline within your Familie-Dominion: there is for this a good example of *David*, who saith, *Men of Faithfulnesse and Integrity shall dwell with me, and serve me.* But he would not keep a Lyar about him, nor he that worketh deceit should neither dwell in his House, nor tarry in his sight. Thus every man within his own Jurisdiction may exercise Family Discipline, both to teach, intercede and govern, and by diligence and prudence may be an Instrument to bring his House in order in Gods Service.

Psal. 101. 6, 7.

7. Let all these things be put into due execution, without which the knowledge of them comes to nothing. Every man to exercise himself in his place faithfully, to instruct and govern his Family consonant to to the Rules of Piety, and Principles of Charity, and to act by the Law of Equity to all under them, as men in some sence obliged to give an accouut of them.

These things considered, and calling to remembrance my place of trust in Gods House, and our special Obligations each to other as we are Christians, I can do no lesse than advise, warn, exhort and intreat you, according to the relation, I stand with you, and interest

tereſt I have in you, to put your duties into practices, and remove out of your Families all offences and diſorders; for ye know we ought not to bear with ſin, to regard Cauſes, or reſpect Perſons, although they be our near relations: but to do Juſtice with Equity, and that without delay or partiality; for we may not harbour evils, nor ſuffer diſorder in our Families, and that we have no juſt complaining in our ſtreets. 'Tis true we cannot expect members of Families ſhould be free from all Infirmities; where then would be the uſe of bearings and forbearings? Beware of Upbraiding and Retorting Languages which oft-times creates diſcontents, and raiſes diſturbances in Families. There ought rather to be found among Chriſtians a condeſcention to each others diſpoſitions, concerning their deformities, bearing one anothers weakneſſes, and if it may be to determine Family-failings, within the compaſſe of Family Jurisdictions, and to endeavour to bear one anothers burdens, and ſo fulfill the Law of Chriſt. To ſympathize with each other in temptations and afflictions; that ye may not make your lives a burden to your ſelves, and a trouble and grief to others: for conſi-

Deut. 13. 8.
1 *Tim.* 5. 21.

der that miscarriages among Christians are attended with high aggravations. First, a dishonour to God, a discredit to the truth, a disparagement to Professors, a grief to Relations, a sorrow to well-wishers, a bondage to themselves, and a rejoycing to their Enemies. My advise is therefore for the time past, wherein any of you have offended each other, to repent it, and wherein others have trespassed against you, upon their submission pardon it; & let all former things be laid dead, and buried in the grave of Oblivion, no more to be remembred, or have any more Resurrection, to disquiet your peace here, or to evidence against you hereafter. And for the time to come, my Counsel & Exhortation is, to set the fear of the Lord before you, & observe one anothers tempers; consider each others frailties, and when ye have any thing to say, remember to take suitable seasons; endeavouring to remove Jelousies, avoid all occasions that may tend to provocations, and if possible let all be swallowed up in dear affections, which best becomes such near Relations, and most adorns professing Christians.

But yet a few words more particularly, that reſpects every Houſe and Family to divide their Duties to each other, and that ſeverally.

1. HUsbands ought to love their Wives, as Chriſt loved the Church, and as they love themſelves, and to rule over them with much Tenderneſſe, and to govern with diſcretion, and commend their ſubmiſſion by the power of a free and conſtant affection: to imitate the Lords Pattern, who loved his Spouſe better than himſelf; covering deformities, bearing Infirmities, taking part with them in their Diſtreſſes, attending them with neceſſary Accommodations and ſuitable conveniences at all times and in all conditions; remembring both are but one fleſh; and that a mans wife is half himſelf; conſidering ſhe is a Building of the greater Admiration; and being brought to man, holds forth the Order, Honour and Perfection of Gods Creation. Likewiſe Husbands are to dwell with their Wives according to Knowledge, having reſpect to their weakneſſes, and to honour *Eph.* 5. 25. 28.

them as the weaker Vessels; For the Woman is the glory of the Man, and yet under his Authority, to teach her subjection, and to shew him he is her protection.

2. *Wives ought to submit themselves to their own Husbands as unto the Lord,* Remembring 'tis Gods own Institution, That man should Rule and have the Dominion, and Woman should obey and be in Subjection: and God hath Ordained and Honored men to be Heads and Superiours; and as the Church is subject to Christ, so ought Wives to be to their own Husbands; and that Gods own Order and Ordinance might be owned and adorned. Let them imitate *Sarah*, who obeyed *Abraham*, and called him Lord. Thus in old time the holy Women put on the Ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which well becomes every Christian, and is much set by in the sight of God and man. Let Wives then give that Reverence and freely yield that due submission to their Husbands which God hath required of them; alwayes endeavouring to approve themselves suitable assistants, and meet helps, according as they were first created and appointed to be a comfortable Nurse and Yoak-fellow, to rejoyce them,

Ephes. 5. 25.

Gen. 3. 16.

and

and to be a constant succour and comfort to them.

3. Parents ought to educate and bring up their Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by good Counsel and sound instruction to discharge their duties to them in matters of Faith and Religion; and as God hath blessed you with Children, so perswade your Children to be Instruments of Glory to him, and to make known to them their natural affection, according to the neerneſſe of their Relation; avoyding temptations and occasions of their provocations. Let every man exercise his fatherly care with Providence and Moderation, to make a comfortable provision for them; endeavouring to match and prefer them to such as truly fear the Lord, and act and walk consonant to the Rule and Circumstance of his Word. *Eph.* 9. 4.

4. Children ought to obey their Parents in the Lord, and to honour Father and Mother; this is Gods Precept, for so saith the Word, acknowledging them duty and obedience, and rendring them their due in Reverence, confessing their propriety in them and their authority over them; to command them *Eph.* 6. 1.

and dispose of them freely, to observe their instructions, & patiently submit to their corrections; knowing that children which are Inferiours, being disobedient to Parents, their Superiours in so neer a Relation, is an offence with a high aggravation: First, 'tis a sin against God the Author of Family-Government. 'Tis a sin against man, which God hath appointed as his Vicegerent. 'Tis against their own father, and so 'tis unnatural and contrary to the light of Nature. But let children humbly obey their Parents, and see that they do their duties; so may they expect in due time to inherit Gods promised blessings.

5. Masters which also stand in the place of Superiours, and may do much for God in their places, and by that power and command they have under God and over their Servants, by restraining them from vice and vanity, and by giving liberty and incouragement in acts of Vertue and Piety. Masters are to give unto their Servants that which is equall and just, knowing they have a Master in Heaven, who respects not Persons but just and equall dealings. They also are to forbear Threatnings and oppressings, because whatsoever is measured to another by any man

Col. 4. 1. 9.

man, the ſame meaſure ſhall be meaſured to him back again.

6. Servants ought to obey and ſubmit to their Maſters in all things as unto the Lord; not only to the gentle and good, but to ſuch alſo of them as are froward; not with eye ſervice as men-pleaſers, but with ſingleneſs of heart as the Servants of Chriſt, acknowledging their power by obeying their precepts, ſtriving to pleaſe them wel in all things not anſwering again, nor purloyning; walking in all honeſty, and ſhewing all Fidelity, that in all ſervices, and by all means they may adorn the Doctrine of Chriſt in all things. *Tit.* 2. 9, 10.

7. And Laſtly, Let every one do their duties in their ſeveral Obligations, whether Superiours or Inferiours. I may adde to the reſt, Land-lords and Tenants, who ought to deal faithfully each to other as unto the Lord. Land-lords are in ſuch places, and have great advantages to do good ſervices, if they do improve themſelves for the Lord, and give good Councel to their Tenants, according to his Holy Word. Let them remember although they are Landlords to men, yet they are but Tenants and Stewards to the God of Heaven; Who hath the diſpoſing of all things, who can increaſe and di-

miniſh at pleaſure, and gives and takes away as he pleaſeth: & as they expect Obedience, Dues and Juſt accounts of their Tenants, So the Lord, the great Land-lord, expects his Obedience, Dues, and juſt accounts, as we ſtand his Tenants and Servants. Let Tenants alſo deal faithfully and do equally in Juſtice, agreeable to the good Rule of doing as a man would be done by; acting according to the laws of Righteouſneſſe towards God, and the Principles of Uprightneſs towards men: For whoſoever ſhall make a breach upon the Rules of equity and equal dealing, the Lord will requite them in Juſtice anſwerable to the Law of Retalliation. But let Superiours know the limits of their Commands, which is over Bodies and not Conſciences.

*Mat.*7.2.12.

Some Rules concerning private and perſonal Government.

EVery particular perſon is charged with a ſouls protection; and it being a weighty imployment to be charged with a Souls Concernment, it being of a greater value than can

Joh. 2. 8.

can be reckoned the gain and losse of it, being more than the gain and losse of the whole World. Let the former Rules be taken upon once again in order to personal Regulation. For there we ought to begin the Foundation, for the better accomplishing of the great work of Church-Reformation; for although this come last, 'tis none of the least works to be done, and that which pertains to every Christian man to set and keep things in order at home in this little World and more private Jurisdiction. For 'tis the greatest piece of Knowledge for a man to know the depth of himself, and the highest Conquest for a man to overcome himself; and the most excellent part of Government, when a man can rightly order his own heart, govern his own life, and rule well his own spirit. *Prov.* 16. 32. 'Tis not only reported but experienced, that Heart-work is the most difficult work; to which we had need use all the means that may be allowed, and to make use of all the helps that can be obtained.

1. By *Election*; As the Universal Lord hath set too great Lights to rule in the Universall World, and hath appointed Guides and

and Overseers to enlighten and govern the Church of God; so hath he been graciously pleased to make Heavenly provision, to order and rule the Inner man; and as the Lord in his matchless love hath freely sent his Son to ransome us from everlasting slavery, so he hath freely given his Spirit to conduct us towards eternal felicity. Let every one then choose & imbrace that means God hath Ordained for the obtaining and receiving Gods holy Spirit, which with Reverence I may truly call, The prime Overseer over the Soul; he is the great Teacher, Leader and Conducter of the Saints, and whose Office may be fitly compared to the Office of an Overseer or Ruler. He is the Christians guide to enlighten and direct them, to sanctifie and comfort them, to strengthen and confirm them, to improve and quicken them to duties; and likewise he helps our infirmities, interprets our groans, and presents our supplications, and makes requests for *Saints* according to the will of God. The bodies of Saints are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and the Tabernacle of God, where he dwels and governs according to his word; he helps us to mortifie our sins, and is grieved at our Transgressions.

Acts 5. 32.

Thus

Thus is the Kingdome of Heaven within you agreeable as the Scripture hath expreſt; which conſiſts of Righteouſneſſe, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt. He alſo convinceth the World of Sin, ſtrives and waits upon man to correct and conform them, the Goſpel Order and holy Profeſſion, and ſo guides the ſaints into all truth, and ſhews them things to come. *Jo.16.13.*

Secondly, Conſcience may be called an Overſeer in a more ſubordinate and limited ſence, which the Lord hath ſet in man, which is the Epitome and Breviate of the World, which will act for God, and aſſiſt for the Souls ſpiritual good; ſerving to rule and order the whole man, even to regulate and Record every word and action. The Office of Conſcience is to oppoſe ſin, reprove ſin, condemn for ſin; and if the ſinner be impenitent, it terrifies and torments the ſinner, and like a faithfull friend, firſt tell him of his fault ſecretly; if he amends, 'tis forgiven by God freely; but if not, Conſcience either diſcovers it to be judged here, or elſe bears witneſſe againſt them at the Bar of Judgement hereafter. *Rom.2.15.* But Conſcience will do Juſtice in it's Office; for it will excuſe if guiltleſſe, and bear teſtimony to a mans ſimplicity and god-

ly sincerity, and upon every pious action it ministers joy to the Inner-man. I may adde the light of Nature, which I
1 *Cor.* 11.14. may call a help in this personal Government, which in morall things will give information, and tell a man of sin. These helps, with a mans own endeavour, may (by Gods blessings) come to set his house in order.

2. By *Direction*; To give a mans self up to be directed and taught by the dictates of Gods holy Spirit, submitting
Isa. 11. 2. to the Laws and Oracles of the Spirits administrations; making his Rules and Orders his first and chiefest Councellors, giving heed
*Psa.*119.24. to the motions and pressings of the spirit, and to the direction of the light within. For although some dissenting friends may Idolize it, yet I warn the brethren that they no way despise it, but observe Conscience in it's Informations and Incouragements, in it's Reproof, Recalls, and Chidings; for Officer-like it praises for well doing, and reproves and punishes for evill acting. Let Gods goodnesse be admired in assigning such helps for us, in setting such lights in us, and Overseers over us, to watch for us, to strive with us, to assist and help us,

to

to govern our hearts and houſes when as we cannot help our ſelves: Let theſe Lights and Guides be conſulted with, and ſubmitted to, well obſerving their Counſell and Direction in order to a better Regulation, and that within the Precincts of this Perſonal Dominion.

Beware of grieving and quenching the Spirit, and of reſiſting and offending Conſcience, and extinguiſhing the light the Lord hath placed in us; but rather humbly to accept and reverently to entertain the Lords Overſeers, as the Lord welcomes poor converted ſinners, even to affect them, to imbrace them, to delight in them, to honour them, highly to prize them, to rejoyce in them, and to be thankful for them. Theſe things being well obſerved, God might be more glorified, the heart better commanded, and the Soul more rejoyced. For a man to till his own ground is the beſt Husbandry, and a man is moſt diſcreet when he is wiſe for Eternity. A mans chiefeſt work is to ſtudy his own condition, to take himſelf to cure, and become his own Phyſitian. To conclude this point, let every Chriſtian take care for his ſouls nutriment, it's

Eph. 4. 30.

1 *Theſ.* 5. 19.

it's holy Ornament, it's spiritual Contentment, and eternal Preferment.

3. By *Correction*, By afflicting, judging, and correcting a mans self for good omitted, and for evill committed against a gracious and holy God, who waits to be gracious to do our Souls good, and to resist the motions of the flesh; and as the Apostle speaks to beat down and keep under the body, & bring it into subjection, and to exercise the spiritual sword, to revenge all disobedience, and pull down the strong holds of sin; submitting to the guides in this prime and more private Kingdome; and in all souls dangers to take care to ingage their assistance, who will be faithfull for a mans security, to manage the War against the spiritual enemy; and becaus the heart is deceitfull and treacherous, & will be ready to comply with the Souls enemies, and so beget an inward and home-bred war, which will grieve the Spirit, disquiet the Conscience, darken the Light, and endanger the Soul. Beware therefore Christians, and endeavour to prevent these dangers: let every one stand upon their watches. The Christians task is a double watch,

Jam. 4. 9.

1 *Cor.* 9. 27.

Jer. 17. 9.

watch, the one to keep the heart from extravagancies, and the other to keep the enemy from approaches; as *Pro.*4.23. the Wise man speaks, *above all, keeping watch over the heart with all diligence*; for if he take the heart, the Tower of the body, then will all be in danger to be yielded to the power of the adversary, and then he will turn all members as Instruments to serve Iniquity, the foot to walk to do Impiety, the ears to hear Folly, the eyes to behold Vanity, and the tongue to speak corruptly. Thus sin when it's conceived in the womb of the heart, and is nourished and nursed there, in time comes to look out at the windows of the eyes, and breaks out at the door of the mouth, and so brings all out of order, and brings the soul into imminent danger; for he that hath not rule over his own spirit is like a City without walls, *And he that bridles not his tongue, that mans Religion is vain*; besides he lies open to be taken and carried captive by the spiritual enemy, and so in danger of being inslaved in everlasting misery. *Pro.*25.28

4. By *Protection*; Keep thy soul with all diligence, for 'tis the best policy for a man to make provision for his souls security, make the

the Name of God thy Castle
Deut. 4. 9. of retreat, and his promises thy chief Tower and refuge of defence, take to thy self all the armour of God, especially the shield of
Pro. 18. 10. Faith, and the Gospel-sword. I would have the Reader do in this case as a Prince had done for his own safety and protection, who kept his Souldiers alwayes armed; being demanded why he did so, he replyed, How did he know which way, at what time, and with what power the enemy would come upon him? This may be fitly applyed by every Christian who hath a precious soul to preserve, and a politick & potent enemy to encounter withall, who sometimes presents guilded baits, and beautifull temptations to betray and insnare innocent souls, and other times by dismall stormes and dreadfull apparitions to fear and drive us from our faith and holy resolutions. Christians of all
Ephes. 6. 11. 13. others had need to be furnished and armed with spiritual weapons, because they are the most provided and stored with Heavenly Graces and Soul-Treasures, and that's the cause the evill one is so frequent and violent in their borders; for their own protection,

tection; Let Christians act like Garison-men, examine all that go and come, and like the Temple-men, to let in the Holy, & keep out the unclean; and also like the Sea-men, if the Vessell leak, they speedily cast it out again. Be wise, and set a watch before the door of the heart, and three outward guards at the several Ports, before the Mouth, the Eyes, and the Ears, that nothing be conveyed in or out at these passages, that may prove the Souls destructive enemies. For the more certainty and better security, observe these short Rules;

1. Get all things within into Order, Peace, and Unity; for Concord and Unitiy like walls to a City.

2. Get thy self stored and armed with spiritual Artillery.

3. Wait and watch the motions and assaults of thy subtill adversary.

4. Manage with courage all Combats and Encounters to obtain the Conquest and Victory.

5. By *Supplication*; By Verbal, Mentall, and Cordiall Prayers, to ask with the mouth, to seek with the heart, and knock by the hand of Faith; Let Gods free grace, the prime and efficient Cause of all safety and successe; be hum- *Eph.*6.18.

bly admired, and thankfully acknowledged, and by a constant and fervent interceding the Throne of Grace for Gods blessing to season and sanctifie all means and endeavours. The effectual and fervent prayer of a Righteous man availeth much; being mixed with Faith, obtaineth Vertue and Power from God, to assist and us to order and govern our selves according to his Word, and that he would be graciously pleased to enable and quicken us to our duties, to teach us to number our days, to improve us by his Spirit, supply us with his grace, relieve us by his power, protect us by his providence, to furnish us with Might in the Inner-man, to know our selves, to rule our own houses, to command our own spirits, that we may be patterns of Order and Government to other believers, and that he would be intreated to learn us spiritual Art and holy Skill, to defend and secure our selves our souls and Soul-Treasures against all the wiles and policies of our grand enemies, that having the Rule over our own spirit, we may be as him that hath taken a City, and obtained the Conquest over the great Adversary, and so by Gods grace we may be safely conducted through

Mat.7.7.

Isa. 5. 16.

through all Combats and Temptations, and at last received into Everlasting Mansions.

6. By *Exclusion*; To exclude all false Counsels, foolish conceits and vain imaginations from the heart, and to banish all lurking lusts and absurd pretences from the Court of the Inner-man. But in order to the Executing and Effecting this good Work, let every soul apart call and keep a private and particular Court within the limits of his own personal dominion, and let this judgement be holden as Gods spirit hath given Charge and Commission, and so to exercise the power of a just and righteous government, and to bring every word and action into judgement: and because the heart is deceitfull and will oft-times disguise it self, and evade the truth, and is full of windings and turnings, and false pleadings. Let every one take an exact and legall way of tryall, and a strict and formal way of Judgement, and so proceed to Examination, Probation, Condemnation and Execution; and let all be done according to Law and Truth. For a man may do Injustice upon himself: Let Con-

Ephes. 4. 31, 22.

Pro. 19. 21.

Pro. 28. 26.

science sit as Judge, for Conscience will side with the Lord, and judge for God and for the souls good. Let the pure Law of God conteined in his Word be the Rule to proceed by; let the knowing and understanding part be the witnesses to give in the testimony to every action, and against every Circumstance of evill doing; let all the faculties of Soul and body be as Jurors, and call in every miscariage to make up the clearnesse of the Evidence, which is the ground and guide of Justice. Let the Law and the Offence be equally compared, and neither bosome nor secret sins be respected; that the Old man with his deeds may be cast and condemned, and the body of sin executed and destroyed, and buried in the grave of Oblivion, never to have any more Resurrection; Either to disquiet our peace here, or to evidence against us hereafter; knowing the terrour of the Lord moves me to be earnest to perswade: For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged of the Lord, neither condemned with the World. Let us therefore beware and sin no more, for behold the great Judge stands before the door.

1 Cor. 11. 31.

7. By *Execution*; To put personal Discipline into due Execution, without which all is

is nothing; for practice is the life of the Law, for if the practick part be neglected, the blessing will not be obtained, and that because the condition is unperformed. Let all persons learn to command and rule themselves, and especially Superiours, who should command and rule others. For if a man knows not how to command himself, how should he command Inferiours; and as the Apostle speaks, *If a man knows not how to rule his own house, how should he take care of the Church of God?* According to the old saying, If every man would rightly order and govern one, 'tis the ready way to reform the whole Congregation. I hope the words I have written touching personal Regulation will not be thought so Impertinent, but that they being timely applyed & suitably improved, may tend to the furthering and establishing a Righteous Government. And as I have been speaking of some particulars touching the governing a mans life, so I would adde a few words by way of Remembrance what is to be set in order at or before a mans death. I will ground my speech upon the words of the Prophet *Isaiah* to King *Hezekiah*, who was commanded to set his House in order because he should not live *Isai.* 38. 1.

but dye: we being all under the sentence of Mortality, become concerned to set our houses in order speedily. Doubtlesse as *Hezekiah* was a King, he was under a great care to set and leave things in order within his dominion, and as he was head of a Family to set things in order within his Family-Jurisdiction, and as he was a servant and child of God to set his accounts in order according to his Will and Word; so is every Christian concerned within the compasse of his place and power, as he may have the charge of a Congregation or the charge of a Family and the charge of his own soul, to discharge our trust and do our duty, and so set our house in order before we dye. *Hezekiah's* pattern is a good precedent for every mans direction to prepare our reckoning, to form and present our accounts. Mark well what he saith, in Verse the third, in giving up his Accounts to the Lord, saying, 1. *I have walked before thee in truth*; 2. *And have done that with a perfect heart*; Thirdly, *And that which is good in thy sight.* This is but a brief and short breviate, but it contains an excellent and full account. 1. I have not talked, but I have walked not before others but before thee, not in Error but in Truth,

Isa. 38. 3.

Truth. 2. Not in ſhew but in heart; not with a double and impure heart, but with a upright and perfect heart. 3. He doth not ſay he would and will do, but I have done, not that which is vain, but that which is good; not in the ſight of men, but in the ſight of God. To be ſhort, let theſe words be laid to heart; For God is exact and will view every mans Account, for we muſt all appear at the Judgement Seat; See that ye have prepared a good account to preſent in the day of Accounts. 2. As every Chriſtian is to ſet things in order to account with God; ſo he is to leave behind him ſome examples of Piety to the World, that his orderly life, zeal for godlineſſe, and his acts of charity, when he is no more, may perfume his memory, and be like *Abels* Sacrafice, to ſpeak after he dyes, and may be worthy of Imitation to Church-family, and Neighbour-hood Nation. 3. As touching temporal ſubſtance, that the Lord hath made a man Maſter of, or rather Steward over. He is likewiſe to ſet in order to diſcharge his place and Steward-ſhip faithfully; that he may have peace when he is called to dye. To diſpoſe and divide his wordly goods and earthly poſſeſſi-

2 Cor. 5. 10.

Rom. 14. 12.

ons timely and equally, agreeable to the Righteous rules of Religion and the beſt principles of Equity and Reaſon, both to Yoke-fellow and Poſterity; or for any other for whom he may be intruſted or obliged; either to widdows or to fatherleſſe, and both towards God & men to diſcharge a good conſcience. 4. To conſider and ponder well to ſettle all things ſo ſtraight and juſt between them that may prevent all future ſtrife & diſcord among them; that none may juſtly ſay when he is gone, he is the man that did, or cauſed this or that wrong: this being Religiouſly obſerv'd, many injuries & quarrells would be prevented, and ſo peace and love may be preſerved. 5. If any one ſhall be like to depart this preſent life, poſſeſt of this Worlds goods, and hath no natural Heirs or near Relations: let him not forget but remember to communicate to the poor Chriſtians; let them make the Deacons of the Churches their Overſeers, and the poor Saints their Executors. Let all remember, but ſuch in a ſpeciall manner; Or elſe to bequeath his Wealth and Treaſures to ſome pious and publick ſervices; in ſo doing they will honour their Profeſſion, and lay up for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come.

Some

Some may think I am out of the way in leaving the Churches and turning into Families, and treating with particular persons. Let them know I have been in the Churches service, attending and instructing Church-members apart in their own houses, and to instruct them in their Family-duties and Church-Orders; Inciting them and exhorting them to prepare their Children and Servants for members to people the Churches.

---

6. *The true Order and right manner of the Execution of Church Government.*

IUstice and Judgement are the substantial parts of Church government. Justice is a great word, and the action is a shoulder work, and being in it's Execution, carries a great commendation. *Isai. 9. 7.* It advanceth Christs Honour, promotes Truths Credit, renowns Christs Churches; It breaks Sathans designs, promotes good Causes, prevents and disturbs evill instruments, and rejoyces Christs innocent servants. In my further prosecution of this matter I would observe this following order;

1. What Justice and Discipline is in it self.

2. What

2. What, or who are the offenders upon whom it is to be executed.

3. What is to be understood and observed in it's prosecution.

4. What priviledges are to be maintained in Christs Congregation.

5. What disorders are to be prevented, corrected and removed.

6. Some branches of Injustice and oppression to be avoided.

7. How the Execution it self should be rightly performed.

First, What Justice is; it consists of these general parts: an Offender, an Executioner, a Law, and a penalty. Justice in it's Execution is, when a faithfull power shall inflict punishment upon a convicted Offender, consonant to the true intent of the Law in that case provided, and the Execution performed without delay or partiality.

2. What are the Offenders and offences against whom Justice is to be executed. First, There are private faults and offences that are committed between Brother and Brother: in which case the injured or offended brother is to tell his brother offending, of his fault betwixt them alone; If he hear not, take one or two more, If he neglect to hear them tell it

Mat. 15.

to

to the Church, if he neglect to hear them, then let the Church do their duty, and purge themselves of iniquity; For as a man will haſten to purge poyſon out of his body corporal, much more ought Chriſtians to purge ſin out of the body ſpiritual; But if thy brother hears thee and repents of the evill heartily, thou oughteſt to forgive him freely, fully and perpetually. But if it ſhall happen that any two perſons ſhall oppoſe each other, in and about a matter and fault committed, *Joſh.* 7. 18. and have no other witneſſe but themſelves, and there can be neither punctual nor circumſtantial proof made to decide the controverſie; then doubtleſſe 'tis the Churches duty and liberty to make their humble appeal to the God of Heaven, by caſting lots, and *Prov.* 8. 18. making ſerious ſupplications *Prov.* 16. 13. tohim, that he would be pleaſed to order and diſpoſe of *Acts* 1. 26. the lot for their direction, to ſhew which of thoſe two was the guilty perſon: and when the Lord hath diſcovered him, let the Church do their duty that concerns them.

Con-

Concerning RESTITUTION.

IF an Offender do confesse his fault, and promise an amendment, let him make Restitution for that wrong he hath done. For as it is a great part of Justice, so 'tis a very necessary part of Repentance; for it repayes a just recompence for injuries done, and 'tis a very great destruction to sin. How can a man expect his sin should be pardoned, before the wrong he hath done be repaired, or that be restored which he hath unjustly took and wrongfully detained. Doubtlesse if a man injure his brother in body, goods or good name, he stands bound in Justice to make him reasonable Restitution, and this is congruous with Gods righteous Law of Retaliation; For oftimes Justice requits and inflicts punishment in the same Act in which a man hath sinned. This also concurs with the Law Christ hath given, which saith, In effect, what measure a man measures to another in sin, the same shall be measured to him in punishment back again.

Exod. 22. 12.

Jud. 1. 7.

Mat. 7. 2.

Con-

Concerning Hereticks.

An Heretick, after the first and second admonition reject or cast away; because one corrupted person may corrupt the whole body, being one that is perverted or willingly turned aside from the Truth; an Actor of Sexts, or maintainer of a false belief, and hath subverted or overthrown himself; rejecting the true Religion, and so becomes an instrument of his own condemnation. *Tit.* 3. 10, 11.

Concerning dealing with publick Offenders.

Such as sin openly are to be rebuked publickly, and the Church is to withdraw from every one that walks disorderly, that he may be ashamed of his Iniquity, and that every particular admonition and publick withdrawing may put others in fear and be as a general warning. Now touching such sinners mentioned in the Fifth of the *Corinthians*; There is some small distance between some faithfull Christians; Whether 1 *Tim.* 5. 20. 2 *Thes.* 3. 6. 14.

Whether such offenders there noted may be received into Communion if they be penitent; some judging, if they repent they may be received; others judging, although they do confesse their sin, yet the Church ought to withdraw from them. I confesse they plead reason on both sides. One alledging thus, That if that end be already accomplisht for which the Ordinance of Excommunication was appointed, what need or reason is there the person should be excluded? Others reply, If the sinner be not speedily sentenced, the Church will be leavened, and that for such publick and scandalous sins, by which God is so highly dishonored, and the Church so greatly reproached. The Church cannot be purged untill the guilty person be punished.

Christian Reader, As touching this matter, I will presume to take the place of a Moderator; for I have heard the question debated among able men, who in the main agree and design the self same thing, there's only a form of words betwixt them, both agree the sinner shall be called into question: The one admonishes him for his evill in the Name of the Lord; The other passeth a sentence against him by the power of the same Lord; both rebuke the person for the

the wickedneſſe done, both bear their teſtimony againſt the crime, in order to clear the Church of his Tranſgreſſion; both diſ-priviledge the Tranſgreſſor of Communion, untill he appears a truly humbled perſon, and gives the Congregation full ſatisfaction: ſo that in truth upon the whole matter there is no material ſubſtance that's worthy to bear the name of a difference; ſo that for my own part, for peace ſake, I could conſent either wayes; provided the beſt care be taken by all that are concerned, That Gods Honour be preſerved, all ſcandall be removed, the Truths Innocency delivered, and the Churches Reputation vindicated.

---

3. *What is to be underſtood and obſerved in the proſecution of Diſcipline*

FIrſt, There is ſteps and Circumſtances to be obſerved in reproving; 1. Timely, 2. Affectionately. 3. A private fault privately. 4. To deſign the reſtoring the ſinner from iniquity. Concerning Excommunication, let this order be obſerved. 1: Let it be done in Chriſts Name and Authority. 2. See that ſinner be convicted legally. 3. Let the Counſell and Bleſſing of God be ſought

sought fervently. 4. To the end the flesh may be destroyed, and the spirit saved in the day of the Lord. Repentance consists of four parts, 1. Contrition of the heart. 2. Confession of the mouth. 3. Reformation of the life. 4. Restitution for the wrong done. An order in forgiveness, 1. It must be groundedly. 2. Freely, 3. Fully, 4. Perpetually. There is a method to be observed in Prayer, as our Lord hath taught us saying, when we pray, pray after this manner. When Duties want their Order and Circumstance, they are oft-times rejected, instead of being accepted; for 'tis evident God requires equal submission to order as he doth to the duty it self. The Wise man *Solomon* saith, He would put his Pro-

Eccles. 12.9. verbs in order. In all Gods former services about the Ark, Alter and Sanctuary, the Lord precisely required all persons to attend respectively their Offices and places, and that all things should exactly be set in order and appointed to their several uses; and for the breach

1 *Chr.* 19.13. in Order, the Lord in his anger caused some deeply to suffer. The Apostle *Paul* speaking of Church-assembling, and about Prophesying, and touching the Lords Supper, he sums up all with this

this charge, *Let all things be done decently and in order.* 1 *Cor.* 14. 40. The ſame Apoſtle beholds, rejoyceth, commends, and praiſes the order of the *Coloſſians.* Doubtleſs there ought to be ſome method in Preaching: 'Tis great pitty that divine and pure matter ſhould want its beauty and ornament of form and order. St. *Paul* commands *Timothy* to *ſtudy to ſhew himſelf a workman, rightly dividing the Word of truth.* There is a Rule to be obſerved in hearing; 1. Preparation to hear. 2. Attention in hearing. 3. Meditation after hearing. 4. Supplication before and after a bleſsing. There are ſteps and degrees in believing; 1. The faith of credence. 2. The faith of adherence. 3. The faith of endurance. 4. Of ſtedfaſt reliance. A Rule to be obſerved in ſuffering; 1. To have a good cauſe. 2. A right call. 3. A good conſcience. 4. A pure end. To be ſhort, there ought to be an order in all obedience, in reſpect of matter, manner, end, and circumſtance; for the righteous God as truely-puniſhes for the breach of order, as he doth for neglect of ſervices. As order is the ornament of profeſsion, ſo I may call it the maſter-piece of Religion, for both Gods precepts for it, and puniſhments upon

the neglect of it, witness the same. There ought to be a strict order in the commemoration of the Lords Supper, even
1 *Cor.* 11.28. to hold and keep it with such observation, as may answer to the first institution; and in presuming to come to such holy Mysteries, there ought to be great heart-preparations, and self-examinations; 1. In unity of heart, judgement, and affection. 2. In purity of life and conversation. 3. Reverently, as being at the Table and in the presence of
Psal. 86. 11. the God of Heaven. 4 Having an eye to the end, which is the victory Christ hath obtained for every Christian. 5. To act in charity, and freely, because love was the first cause of our felicity. 6. Rejoycingly, as men having interest in the spiritual conquest over our souls adversary, and as men purchased from everlasting misery. 7. Thankfully, humbly accepting, reverently and chearfully embracing, and with thankfulness partaking of those soul-benefits, conveyed and received in that Administration.

SABBATH.

SABBATH.

SOme brief Rules for the better order and obſervation of the Lords Day, or Firſt Day Sabbath: Or if I may not call it a Sabbath: I know no reaſon; But if the *Jews* were obliged to keep a Sabbath in remembrance of a temporall deliverance; from temporall bondage, Chriſtian ſhould be much more bound to obſerve a day, as ſtrict as a Sabbath, in memoriall and remembrance of their ſpirituall and eternall deliverance, from ſpirituall and eternall bondage. For doubtleſs Chriſtians are at great loſſes, becauſe of ſo much remiſneſs and want of ſtrictneſs in the Firſt Dayes ſervice. Firſt, Then let the Lords People be ſtirring betimes upon the Lords Day, called ſo by way of Eminency, having a greater work to do than on other days, a work attended either with greater bleſſings, if religiouſly performed, or with greater damages, if neglected or miſimproved. Secondly, Let them make ſerious preparation, remembring whoſe ſervice it is, and into whoſe preſence they come; conſidering well what they go

Deut. 5. 15. *Col.* 1. 12, 13.

about, and how nearly it respects their eternall Estate. Thirdly, When they come into the Church Assembly, let them attend diligently, and behave themselves reverently, and that before the Lord, with due and humble respect to the administration and Majesty of the Word. Fourthly, Let them with all watchfulness and holy indignation, strive to avoid those unseemly and uncomely behaviours, tempers and gestures of lukewarmness, coldness, drowsie, heavy, and dull and sleepy carriages in Gods Divine services, which is dishonourable to their persons, and also unprofitable to their souls. Fifthly, Let them Meditate upon what they have heard: For although the Lords People of the Congregationall way, are necessitated to take the most pains to hear the Word, in respect of distance of place; yet they have one priviledge, being improved may yeeld some advantage, having a fit opportunity to meditate as they go asunder, or to make repetition as they walk together. Sixthly, To pray that the Preachers heart may be inlarged, and his tongue unlooſed, to speak that which is sound, profitable, and seasonable for their conditions; and when they have heard, to pray that the precious Word

Eccles. 5. 1.

may

may be bleſſed and ſanctified to their ſouls, that by it they may be benefited and profited. Seventhly, To ſtir up each other to a better zeal, even to their firſt love, and to do their firſt works, and in a more ſtrict ſence and exact manner, more religiouſly to regard to keep and ſanctifie a Day to the Lord, by improving the whole Day in holy Exerciſe, either in Praying, Reading, Hearing, Conferring, or Meditating, and to lay aſide all ſuch talk and occaſions, as either reſpect State Matters, or any Secular Concernments, and keep your ſelves that Day to Works of Piety, Mercy, Charity, and Neceſſity. If theſe Circumſtances were but religiouſly regarded and carefully obſerved; 1. Gods Honour would be more advanced, the Lords Day better improved, the peoples ſouls more edified, truth and profeſſion more credited, much needleſs diſcourſe prevented, Satans deſign more weakened, their endeavours would be more certainly bleſſed, and their dayes work more fully rewarded.

There is an order to be obſerved in debates and diſcourſes, which being diſcreetly managed, may tend to profit and benefit. But beware of anger, which I may call the ſouls feaver, and cauſes the tongue to make

digreſsion, and to exceed the bounds of moderation. Let this Rule be taken; to ſpeak one by one, ſhort, materiall, and plain; as *He that bridles not his tongue his Religion is vain*: So the well governing of the tongue, is a good degree of Religion, and deſerves the honour of a good commendation. One by one, to preſerve order; materiall, to have the weight of reaſon; plain, to help the underſtanding; ſhort, to help the memory. I have obſerved a diſtinction; a man may have wit and yet want wiſdome: Knowledge is the treaſure of the mind, but diſcretion is the key. I may call the tongue the hearts meſſenger, and as oft as it ſpeaks without meditation, goes without its errand, if not without reaſon. Some are ſo improvident in their words, and ſo extravagant of their underſtanding, that they can neither conceal it, nor know well to improve it, but inconſiderately lay it out, that it returns them damage and not profit. Every one hath a double leſſon to learn; one to know how to ſpeak, another to know when to hold his tongue. If ſuch Rules were put into practices, it would cauſe men to ſpeak to purpoſe, or elſe ſpare their ſpeeches: For *a word*

Jam. 1.26.

Prov. 17.28.

ſpoken

ſpoken in its ſeaſon and order, is like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver. Prov. 25. 11.

Laſtly, Under your correction, I would tender my private opinion touching the re-admiſſion of penitent perſons, that have been under Excommunication. I have thought there is ſome obſervation to be taken, from the Lords receiving of the prodigal ſon, that ſome ſolemnity and form of ſpeech may be uſed to declare it, and to have as publick a conſent to his abſolution, as there was at his excluſion; and as the Parable ſpeaks, to imbrace them, and to rejoyce with them, becauſe they were loſt, but now found, and wandered from the Lord, but are now returned. Luk. 15. 24.

And as the Apoſtle ſpeaks concerning the Inceſtuous *Corinthian*; he exhorts the Congregation to conſider his remorſe and contrition, to forgive him, comfort him, and confirm their love to him. 2 Cor. 2. 7, 8.

And there is good reaſon they ſhould give thanks to God for them, for hearing their prayers for them, for bleſſing the Ordinance executed again them, for recovering the ſinners out of the kingdome of Satan, and re-entering them into the priviledges of his Congregation.

Fourthly, *What Priviledges are to be maintained in Chriſts Congregation.*

FIrſt, We may ſay in this Caſe of Priviledges, as *Solomon* ſpeaks in his *Proverbs*, *Let none remove the Land-marks which our Forefathers or Elders have ſet*; concerning Churches Rights and Priviledges, which we are to preſerve as a matter of moment, which is part of Goſpell-Order and Church-Government. 1. Touching Elders and Superiors, they are honoured and priviledged with the Offices of Miniſters and Stewards, acknowledged by the Lord to be over his Family and Houſhold. 2. They have the priviledge to forbear working with their hands, eſpecially ſuch as labour in the publick Miniſtery, who are to give themſelves wholly unto ſuch things. 3. They have the priviledge to command others, and others are commanded to obey them; provided all things be done according to Chriſts Laws given them. 4. They ought not to be rebuked as others, but have the priviledge to be entreated as Fathers. 5. For their works ſake and Goſpell-labour, they ought to be much

1 *Tim.* 4. 15.

much reſpected in love, and counted worthy of double honour. 6. The Church ought not to receive an accuſation againſt them, under two or three witneſſes, doubtleſs becauſe the truth is ſo much concerned in their reputations, and repute and credit being the life of ſpirituall imployments 7. 'Tis alſo their priviledge to be highly eſteemed, encouraged, and rewarded, according as the Lord hath given direction and commanded.

Secondly, The Priviledges of the members. 1. As members ought to acknowledge Officers in their Priviledges, ſo Officers ought in their places, to preſerve and ſecure the Priviledges of the members. The people of God have a common right and equall propriety in the wiſdome, gifts, and graces, which the Lord hath given to his Miniſters. For as *Paul*, *Apollo*, and *Cephas*, are reckoned within the Saints Inventory, they are become obliged freely to diſburſe ſpirituall Treaſures: By vertue of an intereſt the Saints may claim it as their right and legacies. In this Caſe the People are proprietors, and their Miniſters as debtors: For as the Lord hath been pleaſed to furniſh his Miniſters with

1 *Cor.* 3.21,22.

Rom. 15.27.

with heavenly riches and graces, so he hath commanded his Ministering Servants, to bestow and improve such gifts for the benefit of the Churches.

Secondly, Another Priviledge as belongs of right to Church-members, is to have their part and equall share in all Gospel-advantages, and holy mysteries, even in that solemn and sacred administration of participating, and having communion together in the Lords Supper, in the serious commemoration of the Lords Death and Passion. But let all that presume to be Communicants at the Lords Table, examine themselves, and make judgement first whether they discern the Lords Body, and so come worthily, understanding his Reall, Mysticall, and Representative Body.

1 Cor. 11. 28.

Thirdly, 'Tis the members Right and Priviledge, to have their voice in electing their Overseers and Officers that are to be set over them, and also in the degrading or excluding any person in Office among them; upon which solemn occasions they ought to be acquainted, that the matter may be freely and generally voted, that no members may complain of being disprivileged; and good reason for it,

Acts 6. 3, 5.

it, because they are to be as Fathers to educate and feed them, and to provide their souls food, in order to their spirituall interest and everlasting good.

Fourthly, 'Tis doubtless the Brethrens Priviledge, to have the knowledge of recieving or excluding any member or members, into or out of commmunion with them, especially in doubtfull or difficult Cases, because they are to be or not to be members of the same body, and to have fellowship with them in the same holy mystery; and if there be any sin contracted, either in denying, recieving, detaining, or excluding any person, the evil may reflect upon the whole Congregation. 1 Cor. 5. 4.

Fifthly, Another Priviledge is, If any Brother hath any injury offered him, or wrong done him, he ought to bring it legally to the Church, and there claim his Priviledge to be heard and relieved, and to call for justice to be executed. Then 'tis the Churches duty to proceed, and do them equity, consonant to that good ancient Rule of doing as a man would be done by, and that without delay and partiallity, that while we are complaining for want of justice from others, Mat. 8. 7.

others, we may not neglect to do justice in the Churches.

Sixthly, Such among the Lords People as are justly poor, being of the body, have a right to be relieved in their outward necessity: for as there is a right of propriety, so there is a right of charity; 'tis the Lords Rent-charge, the Poors due, and the Churches duty. There are some unjustly poor, who are either idle persons, or led through their lusts into poverty; others by mans oppression are brought into penury; there are some impotent poor, so naturally; and there are the Lords poor, who become so through the consequences of Christianity.

Heb. 13.3.

Seventhly, There is another Priviledge that belongs to Christians: That if any Person or Party in a Congregation, should verily judge and absolutely believe, they were oppressed and over-ruled by the rest of the Congregation, in any case or controversie, that it amounts to high contention and disputation, after all christian and serious means used, he or they may make their humble appeal, to some other Church in the same Faith; and if the case be very weighty,

Deut. 17.8,9,10.

weighty, then to have recourse to some ge-
nerall Assembly, that by all
means schisme may be pre- *Acts* 15. 2.
vented, and peace and con-
cord preserved.

To conclude these things: There are o-
ther Rights, Immunities, and Priviledges,
that of right appertain to Church-Members,
that if any have a gift in Prayer,
or by way of Exhortation to 1 *Pet.* 4. 10.
have his seasonable time of liber-
ty, for the exercise of his gift, and to ha-
encouragement in so good a work. Mor-
over; if any are under temptation,
wounding of spirit, sickness of body, or a-
other afflictions, he may and ought to ha-
recourse to the Ministers, and to ask coun-
sell and assistance of the Elders,
or to call for them to be their *Jam.* 5. 14.
visitants, and the Elders ought to
attend them, in waiting upon their duties,
by Prayers, Instruction, or any other servi-
ces, wherein Christs Ministers are obliged,
and become concerned, as they are spiritual
guides, and Gospel-Physitians. Thus we
may both learn and discern the great Privi-
ledges, that pertain to such as belong to
Gospel-Churches; to have interest in such
provisions and advantages, and all within
them-

themselves, under Christs government and dominion, and within their own limits and jurisdiction, where all rights and proprieties are equally to be distributed, their souls duely nouriſhed, their temptations considered, burdens removed, their bodies healed, their poverty supplied, their injuries redreſſed, and their priviledges maintained, and their causes heard, and contentions determined. Thus ought Christians to have things common, in the ſpirituall Commonwealth and holy Nation, and to maintain a free fellowſhip and communion both in priviledges and ſufferings. The truth is, the charge of theſe things chiefly reſpects Officers, to whom the Church hath committed her power, and upon whom they have caſt the burden of their care, who ought as inſtruments in the name of Christ, with the Churches conſent, to exercise the ſeverall parts and offices of Government; and as they are intruſted by God, ſo they ought to act faithfull according to his Word; and as they ought not to exerciſe lordſhip, to uſurp authority, ſo they ought not to deface and diminiſh ought of Christs or his Churches power and dignity: For if our Lord died to enter the government, and our liberties and priviledges were purchaſed at ſo dear a rate, and now committed to the care

of

of the Churches, there is a great obligation lyes upon the Congregation, to see that these things be carefully maintained, and constantly preserved; and especially such as are in publick trust, to improve their places, and discharge good consciences, to be a just defence to all persons in their spirituall rights and immunities, that there may be no just cause of complaints in all our streets or borders.

Fifthly, *What Disorders are to be prevented, corrected, and removed.*

AS when duties are put into the best form, they appear with the most beauty, so when the branches of impiety are set in order, they appear in their ugly shape of deformity. I will set some before you, which I believe are sometimes found amongst you, which are a dishonour to Christians, and are great disturbances to the peace of the Churches; and these evils are both of omission and commission.

First, 'Tis found too much neglected by teachers and leaders, that the People are not taught, but are very ignorant in the orders and principles of true discipline and right government. Secondly,

Secondly, When a man doth not prize and tender the unity and Peace of the Church as he ought, but shall inconsiderately and indiscreetly publish, and possibly endeavour to enforce a Principle upon the People, or a Practice upon a Person, before they themselves have sufficiently tried and proved it, or the People or Person are prepared to bear it, or made fit and capable to receive it, and so oft-times a disturbance attends it.

Joh. 16.12.

Thirdly, Another Disorder which doth mostly respect the Elders: That is, when disorderly walkers who are known to live and continue in sin, and the Church neglects her Duty in Discipline, not remembring all the time this sin is unpunished, God is dishonoured, their Duty neglected, the Truth reproached, the most religious grieved and scorners at Religion rejoyced, Gods appointed Ordinance to destroy the flesh omitted, and the proper means neglected, by which the sinner should be restored.

1 *Cor.* 5.2.

Fourthly, Another Disorder is, when the members of one Congregation, shall receive a member or members from another Congregation, without their knowledge or consent,

sent, or a letter of Recommendation from them to whom he or they did belong (except in any case extraordinary) by which disorders follow bad consequences; for some persons that think Christs Discipline too straight, judging it little lesse than tyranny, and their subjection to it little lesse than slavery, when they are under reproof for some misdemeanors will be shifting places and removing themselves into Communion with other Churches. *Rom.* 16. 1, 2. *Act.* 18. 27.

Fifthly, Another disorder is, when one member hath committed a trespasse against another. The brother offended, which ought to treat with his brother offending betwixt them alone, and to have endeavored to restore his brother again, neither hath affection to regard his brother offending, or faithfulnesse to respect the rule directing, but takes his own irregular course, and whispers the matter till it comes to a breach, and so possibly at last becomes a general disturbance in the Church, and endangers the division of the Congregation. 2 *Cor.* 12. 20.

Sixthly, Another disorder is, when the Congregation shall receive a matter between

brother and brother into hearing, and not inquire of the orderly bringing it to the Congregation. If the matter be brought disorderly to them, they by receiving it, become guilty of disorder with them; whereas they ought rather to reprove them and send them back to the Rule to do their duty, and refuse to receive it before 'tis brought legally. If this was but duly observed many disorders and breaches would be prevented, and the Churches peace better preserved.

Seventhly, Another disorder is when the Church deals with any person or persons for Misdemeanor, either in matter of Doctrine, or for evill in conversation, or Heresie, or Schisme or the like; 1 *Cor.* 3. 3, 4. Oft-times other members for private ends, either for Interest or Relation, will countenance, associate or side with them, and incourage them, and so many times make a distruction, if not a division; such are enemies to peace and contemners of Government; such ought to be speedily noted as disturbers timely restrained, and duly punished.

Eightly, Another disorder touching the Church assembling upon the Lords day, some as it were forsaking, others neglecting

and give no cause of their absenting; others come late, which doubtlesse ought to be there at the Churches prayers, made in order to their Preparation, Sanctification and Direction concerning the work of the Day, *Heb.* 10. 20. Some come when the Lords Market is half over; others with drowsinesse and sleepinesse, as if they intended to make the Meeting-house their sleeping-place; and that time they pretend to improve in Gods service, they sinfully and wastfully spend in the satisfying of the desires of the flesh.

Ninthly, Another disorder is, when the Brethren absent from Church-Communion in the Lords Supper, upon their own private Opinion, conceit, or imagination, to the offence of the Congregation, not giving any cause or Reason to any for their so doing; making no account either to Church or Elder, whether the cause be in themselves or in another, not considering their losse and damage in their neglects, or their error in not committing their Case to censure.

Tenthly, Another disorder is, when the Church have discharged her duty against others that have committed Iniquity. Many such offenders will be their own Judges, *Deut.* 17. 12. and that in their own Causes,

and refuse to submit, if not contemn the Churches censures, not considering that they do presumptuously and dangerously, and do as much as in them lyes to dis-office Christ, dis-priviledge the Church, and not discerning that they refused to be judged by the Law, but will be Judges themselves and that of the Law.

Eleventhly, Another disorder is, when one Brother shall believe a report against against another brother, and that before he knows the truth of the matter, and possibly proceeds upon Rumors, Conjectures or Imaginations to passe sentence of condemnation, and that before any legall Trial or hearing, and so becomes guilty himself of the wrong that's done, *Prov.* 8. 13. in crediting such reports against his brothers reputation, and to judge a matter before 'tis heard, is a fault of which a Christian ought to be ashamed.

Twelfthly, Another disorder or grieveance is, when there is not an equall compliance together in matter of expence and publick charges, either touching the poor members or any other necessary disbursements, but 2 *Cor.* 8. 13, 14. one is burthened, and another is eased, some neglecting their duties, others not answerable to their abilities, and so the affairs and needfull occasions of the

Churches, are not carried on by Equality, according to ability, and to anſwer to Rules of Equity.

Thirteenthly, Another diſorder is to receive an occaſion againſt an Elder, and not under two or three witneſſes, 1 *Tim.* 5. 19. which is a diſorder in many places, not obſerving the Rule in that caſe provided, but upon every ſuſpition or light occaſion diſaffected perſons will bring their Miniſters repute into queſtion.

Fourthteenthly, Another diſorder is, when the Officers with the members appoint dayes of meeting upon neceſſary occaſions which concern all, and for the good of the whole, as days of Inſtruction, Diſcipline, Humiliation or Thanſgiving, or the like; and then Brethren ſhall upon every temporall, indifferent and ſmall occaſion neglect ſuch appointments and uſefull meetings to their own loſſes and the diſcouragement of others.

To conclude theſe things, God is not the Authour of ſuch confuſions, but a God of Order and the Authour of peace in all the Churches; But 'tis the Prince of miſ-rule, who by his ſubtill wiles ſtirs up ſuch inſtruments to make breaches, and to break the Churches: and as I have drawn you a little

Map to shew you the path of his designs; In like manner I would present to you as in a glasse, the nature of your adversary by his Names:

1. He is called the god of this World, who blinds the minds of such as believe not, lest the light of the Gospell should shine unto them.

2. He is called the Prince of the Air, that worketh and ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience.

3. Satan, who opposeth the Lord in his designs, and to pervert the Saints in their paths.

4. Devill, one that deviseth mischiefs, and by his wiles and darts to get advantage to over-rule and destroy the Saints.

5. Serpent, to shew his great policy, craft, and subtilties, in beguiling and betraying innocent souls.

6. He is compared to a Lyon and a Dragon to shew his strength, violence and cruelty, to fear, scatter and devour the Saints.

7. *Belial*, I may adde Tyrant, to draw persons into Infidelity and Apostacie; a Tyrant over them he takes captive, an oppressor, cruell and mercylesse, that Tyranizes over soul and conscience.

Thus I have given you the naming of the

Titles

Titles of your Adversary, some hold forth his great policy, and some his great cruelty; I have done it to alarum you to take to your armour, to keep your watches, to defeat your enemy, and secure your souls.

---

6. Some branches of Injustice and Oppression to be avoyded in the punishment of Sin.

1. THe punishing of sin is our great design. 1. What is sin? 'Tis the transgression of Gods Righteous Laws: and these evills are both of Omission and Commission. In the execution of Discipline we are to endeavour the destruction of all sin, and for our better knowledge and prosecution of this design, we may enquire how many wayes a man may sin. A man may sin severall ways in the Commission of sin, and several wayes touching the punishment of sin. 1. In the commission of sin, a man may actually sin in his own person. 2. A man may sin by counselling and abetting with another in sin. 3. A man may sin by countenancing and incouraging one that hath sinned. 4. A man may sin by not restoring his brother that's overtaken in sin. 5. A man may

hate his brother and have fellowship with sin by not reproving his sin. 6. In a compact body all are guilty of another mans sin that refuse to joyn in the punishment of a sinner. 7. And the Church may contract iniquity in doing Justice and not doing it throughly.

2. How may a man be guilty and sin in punishing of sin? *Answ.* In the branches of injustice and Oppression.

1. To punish a man as an offender without the breach of some Law is Injustice and Oppression. 2. To neglect to punish an Offender that transgresses the Law, is a branch of Injustice. 3. To wrest Judgement out of it's true Channell, and to turn Justice out of it's legall course, is another branch of Injustice. 4. To respect Persons and regard Causes, so as to condemn the innocent and clear the guilty, 'tis Oppession, Injustice, and an abomination. 5. To impose a lesse penalty upon an offender then his offence deserves, is another branch of Injustice. 6. To inflict a greater punishment upon a Trespasser than the Law requires, is another branch of Injustice and Oppession. 7. Not timely to relieve the Oppressed, and duly to acquit and discharge the Innocent man, is another high branch of Injustice and Oppression.

ſion. To conclude this point in queſtion, this ſhews us what Juſtice is, by the rule of a contrary obſervation. To execute Juſtice timely, impartially, and thoroughly is true Juſtice according to Gods Law: having thus ſorted our materials and made our diviſion, I proceed to Juſtice it ſelf in it's Execution.

---

7. *The true Order of the Execution of Juſtice and Diſcipline.*

EXecution is the life of Governing; when Laws and Rules lye unexecuted, 'tis like Ingagements unperformed. Right Diſcipline in it's execution carrieth a good Reputation, It beats down evill deſigns, it gives Countenance to the beſt things, it diſturbs the Nocent, and rejoyceth the innocent. It diſpleaſeth the Righteous God when ſuch as are placed, and be truſted *Prov.* 17. 15. with the weighty imployment of Church-Government; and ſhall either not judge at all, or elſe in judgement are unjuſt and partial. To puniſh the Innocent that ought to be cleared, or to clear the Guilty that ought to be puniſhed. A man had need be juſt in diſcharging Conſcience in puniſh-

ing

ing sins, lest he be found guilty of the bloud of perishing souls: and when the Church of God shall assemble themselves upon this solemn occasion;

1. Let the Word be sounded like a Trumpet, that the people may be warned and informed into whose all-seeing presence they come; and that God is present with them, and judgeth among them, to beget the people in an awfull fear and holy reverence of his sacred Majesty and Presence; To remember the people by improving some words by way of charge, and to produce Commissions from Gods holy writing, and to let the people know they are properly concerned, legally returned, and solemnly ingaged, to take their places, and humbly to attend upon Gods services, and to tell them the Lord hath betrusted us with Offices and Priviledges, and furnished us with such authority, that we should act like a holy Nation and spiritual Court, in all Justice and Fidelity.

2. Because all things are sanctified by the Word and Prayer, let humble and fervent supplications be made to the God of Heaven to be counsell for you, and to prepare, sanctifie and direct you in that serious matter undertaken by you, and that your part may be

be so done and performed on earth, That whatsoever ye bind or loose may be done and confirmed in Heaven; *Mat.* 18. 18. and as in all other Religious services there ought to be good advice taken sufficient tryal made before the exercise of action, much more in this case wherein we act for God, and must give an account to God in this matter: there had need to precede a Judgement of preparation before the judgement of Execution. 1. To consider, we must act in Christs Name and by vertue of his Authority, and that this action ought as it were to type out the last judgement, and to hold forth Christs Righteous Government. 2. To examine whether the matter be brought orderly, and the parties have proceeded legally. 3. To consider the capacity of the person offending whether a member or a Officer; for although the Lord respects not Persons, yet he allows some priviledge to Offices. 4. To enquire of the nature of the Offence, whether more directly against God or man, whether publick or private. 5. To examine what provocations the offender had to it, and what design he had in it, whether ignorantly or wilfully. Seventhly, Having found out the nature of the sin then to have recourse to the law that makes it a transgression.

greſſion. Let the Law and the Offence be equally compared, and the penalty juſtly impoſed. 7. Let all proceedings be mixed with compaſſion, that it may anſwer to the deſign of Heaven, the end to deſtroy the fleſh and to reſtore the offender out of tranſgreſſion. Having thus made preparation, proceed to probation and to the act of Execution; alſo remembring God is with you, and Judges of the judgement

Pſal. 82. 1. paſſed by you, and that in a ſubordinate & humble ſence: ye ought to hold forth the glory of his Preſence, and that with all juſtneſſe, humbleneſſe and gravity repreſenting his dignity, mercy, purity, and ſeverity, and ſo to paſſe ſentence according as in Juſtice ye ſhall ſee cauſe, without delay or partiality, purged of all favour, prejudice, and hypocriſie, without regard to cauſes, knowing faces or repecting perſons, as

Deut. 1. 17. acting for God uprightly, that it may be received and approved in the Court of Eternity.

Secondly, Some further circumſtances to be obſerved in the proſecution of Church-Diſcipline, let be done and executed ſpeedily; not to ſuffer ſin to lye up-

Lev. 19. 17. on thy brother, or to infect the ſpiritua

ſpiritual body. A green ſore is ſooneſt healed, a diſeaſe taken new is eaſieſt cured; in like manner treſpaſſes or contentions amongſt Church-members taken timely, are beſt purged, appeaſed and reconciled.

Thirdly, Them that are Judges of others in the Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction are to be Counſellors to the offenders, eſpecially if they be ignorant perſons, not to daunt or ſurprize them or take quick advantages againſt them, but as we ought to act in the Lords Name, ſo to act in the Lords fear towards them; to inſtruct them and convince them from the Scriptures, and ſhew them the Laws they have broken that judge them treſpaſſers, and condemns them for tranſgreſſors.

4*ly*. ſhew them their ſin in it's body and deformity; the ſad accidents and bad conſequences that attend ſin, and to make them ſenſible of their iniquity from the evidence of Scripture-teſtimony; ſay to the ſinner, Come ſee what you have done, look upon your ſin in it's aggravation, how ſerpent like it darts and ſtings every one, it reflects upon Gods honour, it darts Religion, ſtings the brethren, diſturbs your Inner-man, gives an occaſion of ſtumbling to the weak; in profeſſion, it daunts the well-wiſhers, and enquires

quires after Religion, and gives the enemies truth an occasion of rejoycing.

Fifthly, To learn to know the offenders design; for oft-times a design by an act intended, may be worse than the action it self committed: there may be Circumstances depending, to be considered, by which the Act may be much mitegated or aggravated, as ignorance or wilfulnesse, as in pretence of conscience, or a design of disturbance, as from a principle of Charity, or in a course of subtilty, the best of these Circumstances will make no justification for any evill action, for that will be to countenance sin, but the better circumstances are to have their mittegations in damages, (I mean in punishments) and the other their aggravations.

6. To observe the disposition, capacity, and temper of the person, not to favour his sin, but in order to gain an advantage upon the sinner; some to save with compassion, some with fear, some with gentlenesse, others with sharpnesse, always to sort, fit, and direct all admonishions, reproofs and corrections, as may best suit with the offenders disposition, and the demerits of his sin and transgression.

Seventhly, To take the most convenient season,

ſeaſon, as I have ſaid; things done in their ſeaſon and order, are like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver, they are not only beautifull to the action, but a diſadvantage to the enemies deſign; but beware leſt while ye are about to heal ſome breaches, you neither prevent nor diſturb your ſelves in ſome other weighty and publick ſervices, and ſo let in Satan to make his advantages. For a man muſt have ſome reſpect in matters of Government to three Eſtates, The honour of God, the quiet of Conſcience, and the peace of the Church. Thus I preſume to tender my Counſell and offer my Judgement and direction, eſpecially to ſuch as have any truſt and publick imployment over their brethren, for men of wiſdome, honeſty and ſufficiency are moſt ſenſible of the Office and buthen of the place, carefull of the Charge and apprehenſive of the accounts they muſt make; like men of diſcretion let them well obſerve the nature of their Office and the worthineſſe of their places, and judge for God, according to the rule of his Word, with all juſtneſſe and gravity. As one obſerving the Judges ſit in the Judgement-Seat, while they were grave and juſt he thought they were gods, but when they changed into lightneſſe and fell into paſſion, he concluded they were but men.

men. Let Christs Officers and Ministers act gravely, justly, and discreetly; instructing themselves and others in their several obligations, both as they are men and Christians: As once a Governour of a Nation observed, saith he, I am King of Bodyes not of Souls, a Commander of men not of Conscience. And as our Lord himself hath taught us to distinguish of duties, and to render every one their dues, and to owe nothing to any man but love. To honour our Lord Christ as the head of the Church, and to respect civil Magistrates as the politick fathers of our Countries. To conclude this point let me say to my brethren as once a Prince said to his son, observing him to mind trifles; said, Come my Son, leave trifles and mind the matters of the Kingdome: So I say to my brethren and every Christian, to leave the trifles of this World, and mind the matters of Christs Kingdome.

Peace and Unity is the great end I have here designed, and 'tis a design God hath greatly blessed. The Scholars in Christs Church ought to be Students for quietnesse and peace in the Churches. The Lord hath not only commanded it, but he prefers Peace before any other Sacrafice. 2. He enjoyned

Mat. 5. 24.

joined his Disciples to seek, peruse, and prosecute Peace. 3. 'Tis further told us from the Lord, *without Peace and Holnesse no man shall see God.* 4. Such as pray for Peace shall be blessed with Prosperity. 5. To the Councellors of Peace there shall be Joy. 6. The makers of Peace are honored by being called Gods posterity. 7. Peace is a fruit of Gods spirit, and a Character of heavenly wisdome. To hast, God is the God of Peace, and Christ is a Prince of Peace, and the Kingdome of God is Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. Thus are Saints to preserve Peace among them, and the Peace of God that passeth all understanding shall keep them.

Thus are Christians become concerned to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace; that is, What the Spirit of God hath united, formed and compacted together, either in respect of Fundamentals, governing and perfecting Principles, always to maintain the ancient Form and true Pattern of sound Doctrine and right Discipline; That Truth and Peace may go hand in hand together, be constant Companions, and imbrace each other. You may please to learn a Lesson from our experience in the *Eph.* 4. 3.

Nation; When we are at Peace at home, then we see our Enemies are quiet abroad; when we disturb and afflict each other by way of persecution, it invites and emboldens our enemies of other Nations, and in the midst of home-bred contentions we hold open a door to let in forreign adversaries. Let Christians make spiritual application, who are within the borders of the holy Nation, to beware of Strife and Envy which makes way for the souls enemy, but to maintain Concord and Unity, which are as Bulwarks against the Adversary, but let Union be made, and Charity increase, and have salt in your selves, and be at Peace one with another; and as a conclusion, I would impose this one Obligation, as the late Legacy of a dying man; that the parties more chiefly concerned, may seriously apply it, and profitably improve it to Gods glory and their own felicity. 'Tis an Incumbent among Christians; I wish it may never cease, to keep the Unity of the spirit (and Truth) in the bond of Peace.

7. *And*

Seventhly, and Lastly.

Some Directions given how to uphold and support Church-Government.

IN order to the preserving and supporting Church-Government, the matter will charge every mans concernment, both Offices and Members; It invites them to their duties, and obligeth them as Christians to discharge good consciences in all due concernments, as they are under several obligations, and become concerned in their respective places.

And First to my well beloved Brethren in the Lord, whom God hath called to high Offices, honored with great Endowments, and obliged in publick services, and therefore I do honor them in their respective places; Even those Elders whom the Lord hath commissionated upon a more general account, who hath inlarged their missions into the Nations, and betrusted them with the care of the Churches, I will not presume to teach them because I have more need to be taught by them; yet I would humbly take leave to be their Remembrancer, and

to intreat them as Fathers to observe their Gospell-lessons as they are directed to them by their several Appellations.

First, they are sometimes called Angells, to hold forth Innocency and Purity.

Secondly, Ambassadors in Christ stead, to personate his Majesty and hold forth his glory in the World, sent to treat with sinners, and to state the terms of Reconciliation, to engage their souls in affection with all bowels of Christian compassion, to beseech them to be reconciled to God.

Thirdly, Messengers sent out by the Churches upon the Lords message, even upon the grand errand of publishing glad tidings. That matchlesse and welcome news to poor sinners; even to publish and proclaim a free tender of a crucified Christ unto a perishing and lost World; that Lamb of God that cleanses souls by his precious bloud. These are Instruments in Commission from Christ, to unite strangers to affect sinners, to prepare members, to people the Churches.

2 *Cor.* 8. 23, 24.

Phil. 2. 25.

Fourthly, They are called Bishops to shew they have a charge, and are Overseers of the souls of such as are Gospell-professors,

ſors, and are to feed Chriſts flock, and to rule the Church of God, which he hath dearly purchaſed with his own blood.

5. Ye are Miniſters to ſhew ye ought not to have dominion over the peoples Faith, neither to be Lords over Gods heritage, but to be faithfull ſervants to Chriſt and the Churches.

6. Ye are called Rulers, to regulate Eccleſiaſtical Affairs, and to ſet in order things that are wanting in the Churches to ordain them Elders, and reform diſorders in the ſeveral Congregations.

7. Ye are called Stewards & placed over the Lords Houſhold, to make proviſions, and to give them their ſpiritual portion of meat in due ſeaſons; which Office preſuppoſeth a high truſt, and ye muſt expect to give a faithfull and juſt account at laſt. Now that you may be guided aright to rule for God, I can do leſſe but pray and wiſh that the bleſſing of Heaven may be upon you, and in you, even the bleſſings of ſoul and body, health and proſperity, but more eſpecially in the holy and high concerns of Eternity; That ye may have all increaſe of grace, fulneſſe of of peace, and at laſt your portion in the everlaſting ſtate of perfection, and in the mean time I freely wiſh ye may be all ſanctified

fied and richly furnished with all spiritual gifts and heavenly treasures, and plentifully accommodated with the fulnesse of the Holy Ghost; that ye may hold forth the Image of God and the glory of Christ in dignity, mercy, purity and severity. To prize and praise the Godly and Pious, & to disclaim and condemn the Irreligious, and that ye may be duly directed and constantly protected by the goodnes and providence of God, in and about the most sacred acts of Religion, and in that serious and ponderous imployment of the Ministry, that the same Lord that hath commanded your service, and given you authority, would be pleased to attend you with his presence, and give you security, and that you may lay sure foundations, and build aright Gods holy habitations, that ye may be Pious Examples to the believers both in Doctrine and Conversation, and worthy patterns of Government in every Congregation, leaving behind you solemn and solid precidents of humility, fidelity, and gravity, with harmlesse and discreet demeanors accompanied with holy policy, cincerity, and purity; that you may both constitute and consolate Churches, unite Christians, repair breaches, and establish the Congregations Even to perfect faith and conduct souls to the everlasting habitations

2. *Concerning Elders appointed over particular Churches.*

I Now direct my speech to the Elders, charged with particular Congregations. My well-beloved Brethren; Considering my relation with you, and the great charge committed to you, and the great account that's required of you, I could not well omit to advise, exhort, and entreat you, not so much to instruct you, as to remember you, to ponder the worthiness of your places, and the weightiness of your obligations: That ye are to serve Christ under his three-fold Offices, in subordination to him; under the Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. And 1. In order and honour to his Propheticall; to teach the people whatsoever God hath commanded you, and to with-hold nothing that is profitable for them, instructing them publickly, privately, and from house to house, declaring all the counsell of God, that ye may be pure from every mans bloud, and seasonably, faithfully, and constantly, opening and preaching the whole-

Acts 14. 23.

Tit. 1. 5.

ome words and sound doctrine, as ye have received it from the Apostles, according to the holy Scriptures, which was sealed by God, and confirmed to them by miracles. In Christs name to teach and perswade, and in much affection to exhort to duty, and by good instruction and a good pattern, to lead and guide the believers in acts and orders of Religion, and a well ordered conversation, observing seasons and dispensations, having an eye to the peoples estate and conditions, discovering to every one their duty, with the benefits that attend it, and also acquainting them with the danger, upon the neglects and contempts of it. 2. Under his Priestly Office, ye are to enquire of God for them, and to intercede him in their behalf, that they may have an evidence of their interest in Christs sacrifice, and assurance of the remission of sin through him: That the Lord would please to encrease their graces, and that the bloud of Christ might purge them from all corruptions, and upon every occasion, and in every condition, to commend them to God by supplication; and that they may be supported and comforted in the inner man; to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving unto God for them, for all benefits and benedictions freely received from him: Moreover,

over, to instruct and acquaint them with the great blessings, that are presented and conveyed by Christs Death and Passion, and to principle them in the great priviledge of his Intercession, and oft to celebrate the commemoration of that memorable act, that so evidently preaches a crucified Christ; to teach them to discern the Lords Body, and to direct them how to communicate worthily; then to call them to the Lords Supper, and endeavour to feast them with the Lords dainties, being communicants at the Lords Table, craving a blessing in every administration, and a sanctified use of every priviledge and blessing, rejoycing with them, and offering thanksgiving for them, for all benefits bestowed upon them. 3. Under his Kingly Office, ye are to make known his Laws, and in his name to instruct them in the order and government of his house, and learn them to know how to behave themselves in the Church of God, that when they trespass, they may not plead ignorance, and so oft-times matters are disputed, in the mean time duties lye unperformed; but let Rulers require obediences according to Scripture directions, with authority, and yet in humility, to act and govern for the Lord, as men that are governed by the Lord, and so

to

to rule and judge in all the Saints affairs, as them that must give an account to God themselves; to counsell, warn, reprove, cast out the impenitent and obstinate, to restore the fallen, to strengthen the weak, to embrace the humble, to absolve the truly penitent, not to bear the spirituall sword in vain, even to do justice, and to shew mercy, alwayes designing to save the sinners, but to destroy their iniquity: Let the exercise of discipline be well mixed with patience and compassion; teach them to have a filiall fear, and to stand in dread of him, who threatens to slay such as will not have him raign over them. I will also set your Titles before you, and for my self I pray and wish all sutable blessing may attend you, in the discharge of the great work ye have to do. These are your Names; Bishops, Elders, Pastors, Rulers, Shepherds, Stewards, and Ministers, all which speak out the burden of your trust, and charge ye have of souls. If one soul be of more value than the whole world, what an obligation hath he that hath the oversight, and must give an account of many souls. Look upon your Offices, and feel the weight of your burdens: Take good heed to your selves, to your doctrine, to your discipline, and to your conversation, and to all the flock over

over which the holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed and rule the Church of God, which he hath purchased dearly by his own bloud; taking care of them, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, not as though ye were lords over Gods heritage, but ensamples to the flock: As Elders, to go before and direct them; as Rulers, to command and govern them; as Pastors, to feed and nourish them; Ministers, not as lords, but to be servants to them; as Stewards, to make provision for them, and give an account of them; and as Shepherds, to watch over them. My dearly beloved, relations in the Lord; look upon that word of the Prophet *Isaiah* for your learning, and take it for your pattern, *Chap.*40. *Vers.*11. *To feed the flock like a shepherd, to gather the lambs in the arms of tenderness, and into the bosome of your affections, and gently to entreat and guide such as are with young*: To lead them into green and sound pastures, and to water them in the springs of pure and wholsome waters, and faithfully to exercise all the parts of the office of a good shepherd; and as the wise man saith, *To look well to the Flocks*; even to take the number of them, the charge of them; to feed them; to assemble them; to rule them;

to

to defend them from men-Wolves and ſeducers, that deſign to deceive and deſtroy their ſouls. To conclude; to act in all godly ſimplicity, fidelity, and gravity towards them, as men alwayes obliged to give an account for them.

---

3. *Concerning the Deacons in Chriſts Congregation.*

DEacons are Miniſters in Chriſts Churches, and are to be men of wiſdome, full of faith, and of a good report, ſound in the holy myſteries, and men of pure conſciences, whoſe quallifications
1 *Tim.* 3. 8. are to be ſutable to the Elders, even to be grave and ſober, not greedy of filthy lucre; likewiſe muſt their wives be grave, ſober, and faithfull in all things; to have well-ordered children, and well-governed fa-
Phil. 1. 1. milies; they are the poor Saints overſeers, and are betruſted with the Churches treaſures; ye are Gods eminent ſervants, and are to be appointed and ordained by election, prayer, and laying on of hands; your place is of weighty concernment, and doubtleſs ye ought

ought to be helps and assistants in government, and as instruments in offices, to fulfill Gods gracious promises: In a sence, to be fathers to the fatherless, and husbands to widdows, and as it were to be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and as advocates for the poor saints. And as Elders are set over the Lords people, more directly and properly in spirituall things, and soul-matters, so Deacons are to wait and serve at the Lords Tables, and to make due provisions for the poors externall and bodily concernments, in respect of their Deaconship, and yet may be usefull to souls, as they may be gifted disciples. In this we may behold Gods wonderfull providence and goodness, in appointing Offices and Officers, to make sutable provisions for his peoples souls and bodies, and that at all times, and in all conditions. And as this is an Office of eminency and necessity, so 'tis accompanied with great care and much difficulty; to carry an even hand, and a faithfull heart, between the Churches poverty, and the poors necessity. And doubtless as Elders are to admonish and reprove in neglects, touching duties of Religion and Piety, which are more spirituall, in like manner it doth concern Deacons to exhort and reprove, in matters that respect

the

the poors outward necessity temporall. Let them remember they are instruments by the Lords order, to take the care and over-sight of the Lords poor; for where there is an Office, without doubt there's power to admonish, that things may be done by equallity, according to every mans state and abillity; not one burthened and another eased. And having so good a cause to plead, in the behalf of the poor and needy, it well becomes you to take boldness to blame such, as detain from the poor their right of charity. My welf beloved Brethren, I wish and pray ye may be blessed from heaven with sutable graces, and spirituall accommodations, in discharge of your duties and great obligations; that as the Lord hath honoured you with a trust in your Offices, so you may faithfully endeavour to honour God in your respective places, acting in all fidelity, confonant to the prime Rules of justice and equall dealings, as men obliged to give an account to God and the Churches. 1. Let them be to the poor as fathers, in respect of compassion, as men naturally sympathizing with them in their low condition. 2. Give them good advice and counsell, to be industrious in their callings, and provident in their expences, that they may not bring any unnecessary charges, and unjust

unjuſt burdens, upon the Congregations. 3. If they be able, and refuſe to work, then to admoniſh them. The Apoſtle is ſharp in this caſe, and ſaith, *If any would not work in their common imployments, neither ſhould he eat of the Churches charges.* Laſtly, They are in the place of fathers, to enquire into their conditions, leſt any lye under temptations, for want of outward ſupplies, and according to the juſtneſs of their neceſsity, and equallneſs of their poverty, to relieve them, and prepare portions for them, ſutable to their conditions; even to feed the hungry, cloath the naked, viſit the ſick, houſe the harbourleſs: This hath the repute of pure Religion, even to viſit the fatherleſs and widdows in their affliction. Let all be done according to thoſe good laws of piety, equity, and charity, and of doing as a man would be done by: And as the burden of the Office is caſt upon you, ſee that you diſcharge your truſt faithfully. And in all this the Deacons are to be aſsiſted, and enabled by the Churches collections, diſtributions, and communications.

Now what power and order there ought to be among Officers themſelves; what power the Meſſengers have over the Elders; what power the Elders have over the Deacons;

what

what power the Deacons have over the Members, which doubtleſs there is ſome order, and that among ſuch as have power, even among Governours as well as in Governments: But I ſhall refer this difficult point to ſome abler head, and more skilfull hand, to determine it. But thus I will conclude to wiſh; That as God hath called you to places of order and honour here, ſo you may be rewarded and crowned with dignities and honour hereafter. To end this point, I deſire that both Officers and Members may learn a lecture for government and orders, from the Firmaments, and by the Sun, Moon, and Stars: They be like the Sun for light and heat; like the Moon for declaring ſeaſons, and conſtancy in circuit; and like the Stars, for holding on their courſe, and keeping order and place. Now if you think theſe few lines, eſpecially ſpoken to Officers, be worthy of acceptation, and may deſerve the place of counſell and direction, conſider of them, and the Lord encreaſe all your wiſdome and underſtanding.

4. *Concerning the duties of Church-members to their Officers.*

MEmbers of Churches as they ſtand in relation to their Officers it concerns them to acquaint themſelves with Scripture-obligations, what is required of them in ſubmiſsion to Officers laws and orders, that they may clearly know, and chearfully do, what reſpect them on their part, to preſerve true order, and ſupport right government.

Firſt, 'Tis the mind and alſo command of God, that Chriſtians ſhould obey ſuch overſeers, as are ſet over them in the Lord, and whoſoever refuſes to be obedient, reſiſt Gods appointment, alwayes provided, they exerciſe rule according to the direction of his Word, not to their perſons as they are men, but as they are the Embaſſadors and Stewards of Chriſt, for they act by vertue of the Lords Commiſsions; and 'tis written, the holy Ghoſt appoints overſeers, and 'tis the Lords meſſage they are upon, and the Lords work they labour in, and God is a God of order, and not of confuſion, who hath ordained go- *Heb.* 13. 17.

vernment, and required your subjection Officers rule for him, therefore members ought to submit to them, for the Lords sake, for conscience sake, for the Gospels sake, and your own souls sake, *That they which watch for your souls, may give an account with joy, and not with grief, for that will be unprofitable for you*; for indeed your obedience is not to man but to God. My dearly beloved Brethren, I beseech you beware in this weighty matter, for there is no sin in the world which the Lord hath punished with greater severity, than he hath disobedience to Authority; neither was it ever heard that the earth opened her mouth wide, to swallow up man, as it did *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, for their resistance and contempt to *Moses* and *Aaron*. The Apostle *Peter* and St. *Jude* do both aggravate this crime, as a grand transgression, for *To speak evil of dignities, and to despise dominion*. St. *Peter* one of our ancient Fathers, in his Epistle to the scattered Christians, he is a very full Author, and that to this very matter, who pleads for submission to Authority, both in Nation, Church, and Family: first to honour God, and to obey such as are appointed by him; to submit to supreme Governours, and such as are sent by them; wives

1 *Pet.* 5. 5.

wives are to be in ſubjection to their own husbands; ſervants are to be ſubject to their maſters, not only to the courteous and good, but alſo to the diſcourteous and froward; and this obedience muſt be for the Lords ſake, alwayes to make true diſtinctions betwixt ſpirituall and temporall ſervices, to give to man their dues and duties, and to God his honour and praiſes.

5. And as the Lord hath required ſubmiſſion to his Miniſters, ſo he hath enjoyned his people to honour them that rule over them, and to know ſuch as labour among them, and admoniſh them, and to count ſuch worthy of high reſpect for their works ſake, becauſe God himſelf hath dignified them, and hath commanded the Saints highly to eſteem them. St. *Paul* gives this high commendations of the faithfull and painfull Elder, that he deſerves the priviledge of double honour; and becauſe their work is labourious and dangerous, the people ought to countenance them by being courteous. The meaneſt inſtrument imployed by the Lord in his ſervice, the Saints ought to receive, and accept with readineſs and chearfulneſs. Doubtleſs he that loves God,

1 Theſ. 5. 12, 13.

Phil. 2. 29.

his truth, order, and ordinances, will naturally reſpect ſuch as act in them as inſtruments: I ſpeak not of needleſs cuſtomes, or idolizing perſons, but to honour God in them, and to honour God by them, and to reverence them, becauſe the image of God is upon them; for God was angry with the *Jews*, becauſe they deſpiſed his meſſengers, and it mounted their ſins, untill there was no more remedies. And to ſome the Lord ſaith in the *Lamentations*, He would divide them, and no more regard them, becauſe they reſpected not their Teachers, nor reverenced the face of the Elders: For what kindneſſes or injuries are done to them, the Lord takes it as done to him; and Chriſtians are to hold ſuch in repute, and to endeavour as much as they may to preſerve their credit, for Goſpel-reputation is the life of ſpirituall trading: Therefore none are to receive an accuſation againſt an Elder, under two or three witneſſes, becauſe in defaming an Elder, the truth ſuffers treble damages; but the fame and eminency of Chriſts Miniſters, is a glory to Chriſt, and an honour to his Churches.

6. 'Tis a duty incumbent, and a matter of high concernment, to preſent humble and fervent prayers, for ſuch as are called to be Goſpel-

Gospel-governours, that they may rule for God agreeable to his counsell, contained in his Word, with all justice and righteousnes, towards all degrees of persons; and to pray, being earnest, that God would send more faithfull labourers into his harvest, that the ignorant world may be converted, and that there might be daily added unto the Church of God, such as should be saved. *Mat.9.38.* And as for those instruments the Lord hath already appointed, to intercede him that he would be graciously pleased, to furnish them with wisdome, enrich them with graces and spirituall treasures, and bestow upon them the spirit of revelation; to ask for spirituall boldnes, and for the gift of utterance, and that they may be spirited against all allurements and discouragements, that neither the fear of men, nor the cares of this world, may remove them or divide them from their duties in Gods services, but that they may speak as they ought to speak, with courage and faithfulnes: And to beg of God that he would please to give them right principles of government, and to honour them with the spirit of discerning and judgment; and as the Apostle saith, Pray for us; that the Gospel may *2 Thes.3.1.*

have a free course, and run and be glorified, and the Gospel-Ministers preserved and delivered: For as we are to pray and give thanks for Kings, and all that are in Authority, that we may live a peaceable life under them, so we ought to make prayers and supplications, for all spirituall Guiders and Governours, that the Gospell may be advanced by them. Let all Christians know, 'tis a materiall duty in the severall Congregations, to assist the Preachers of the Word, by their fervent and constant supplications; and that giving of thanks be returned, and duely rendred unto God, for all those gifts and graces he hath bestowed on them, and for the blessing of God you enjoy by them, and for all the experiences they have enjoyed through Gods goodness to them, the admirable provisions made for them, and his wonderfull providences over them, and for the unexpected benefit you reap by the enjoyments of your Ministers, and that they are not yet removed into corners. Let these things be freely owned, and sensibly and thankfully acknowledged, and Gods due praises sutably and constantly rendred; and if our duties and the Lords due Rents be seasonably discharged, it may be our priviledges may be enlarged, our spirituall

ſpirituall immunities encreaſed, our gifts and graces augmented, and our liberties and freedomes eſtabliſhed.

---

7. Laſtly, *Touching Gods Ordinance, that reſpects his Miniſters Maintenance.*

Firſt, The Church of Chriſt ought to obſerve Gods Ordinance, to aſſiſt and encourage Goſpel-Miniſters with a Goſpel-maintenance, that the Goſpell may not ſtand at their door, and the obſtruction and neglect of this good work, may not be charged upon their ſcore. And becauſe this point may ſeem the moſt ſtrange, I would borrow the more time to ſpeak more at large. In my proſecution I would obſerve this method following, to diſtinguiſh of it: What it is, and what it is not. 1. What it is not: 'Tis not a compelled and forced maintenance, no otherwiſe than the Word of God compelleth. 2. Chriſts Miniſters ought not to make reward ſo their end of Preaching, as no pay no preach. 3. They ought not to expect much leſs to extort from poor men, to whom they had more need to give than receive. 4. Upon the neglect and

1 *Cor.* 9. 17

none-payment, there's no
2 *Cor.* 12, 14. rule in the Goſpell to inflict bodily puniſhment.

2. What Goſpel-maintenance is: 'Tis a free communicating by him
Gal. 6. 6. that is taught in the Word, to him that teacheth in all good things: he that preacheth the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Go-
1 *Cor.* 9. 14, 11. ſpel, and ſuch as miniſter ſpirituall things to the people, the people ought to miniſter temporall things to them. 'Tis due by divine right; the Lord hath ordained it and commanded it; his eminent ſervants have pleaded it and alſo received it; and St. *Paul* ſpeaking of his priviledges, ſaith, he hath power to forbear working; and the ſame Apoſtle, labouring with his hands, reckons it among the reſt of his afflictions, and enjoyns *Timothy* to give himſelf wholly to the Miniſtry: And although they may not preach for lucre, yet they ought to be ſupplyed in neceſſities, if not with conveniencies, and though they may not expect great revenues and augmentations, yet doubtleſs they ought to be ſo remembred, as to prevent decayes and poverties, that ſo the

Miniſtry

Miniſtry may be preſerved from reproaches; ſome having ſpent a great part of their outward ſubſtance, ſome their all, and ſome more than all, which is a temptation to Miniſters, and a diſhonour to the Goſpell.

3. The Arguments alledged for the probation of it. As the Goſpel-Miniſters are reckoned within the Saints Inventory, and their graces the peoples by legacy, ſo Chriſts Miniſters have a right of propriety in the peoples common treaſury. The Lord hath given his own precept for it, and hath charged his Church in truſt to perform it; the neglect is not only the breach of a Law, and omiſſion of duty, but it highly reflects upon the Lords honour and dignity, who hath deſigned all things to be acted freely; God loved us freely; Chriſt dyed freely; this good news is to be preached freely; and ſuch as are taught ought to communicate freely. Every mans ſervants are allowed ſome recompence for their labours; all differing perſwaſions do much countenance their Miniſters, and ſhall ours want their due encouragements; and this is no more in ſubſtance, than what was conſeſt and ſubſcribed in the Confeſſion of Faith, 1660. If a man neglect his own private occaſions,

casions, and for the good of others adventure himself into eminent dangers, 'tis reasonable he should be accommodated from the peoples treasures: It neither consists with Religion nor common reason, that a man in this case should bear his own burden, expend his own particular substance, upon the publick cause and generall occasion; as the Apostle speaks, *No man goes to warfare at his own charges*; as the Scripture saith, *Who is there among you that would shut the doors for nought*: St. *Paul* doth not say, they that preach the Gospell may live, but should or ought to live of the Gospell. He further reasons the case from naturall civility and common equity, to convince the *Corinthians* of the Gospel-Ministers maintenance; and although he refused to take of the *Corinthians*, because of the false teachers, yet he tells them again, he robbed other Churches to do their services: And he saith elsewhere, they that are imployed in Gospel-labour, are accounted worthy of double honour; the workman is worthy of his meat, and the labourer of his wages: And though they labour not so much with their hands, yet they labour with

1 Cor. 9. 7.

1 Tim. 5. 17, 18.

with their brains, and undertake and undergo great difficulties; they are set not only to preach, but defend the Gospell; rulers of a holy Nation; stewards of a spirituall Court; warriers against spirituall adversaries; planters in the Lords Vineyard; feeders of his Flock; goverours of his sheep; physitians of his patients; plowers of his earth; sowers of his seed; labourers in his harvest; and as threshers in his barn: and all for spirituall provision for the nourishment of souls, even for their welfare, safety, and present profit, and to guide and conduct them to their eternall preferment.

4. The necessity of it. In the former buildings some laid the foundations, other were overseers of the work, and some to bear burdens. There is a necessity the Gospell should be preached, and the foundations of Gods spirituall house laid, and overseers appointed, and the work preserved, and others to help to bear the burdens: For if the Gospell be neglected, there is a woe pronounced; so that in this Gospell-work there are instruments and assistants. Then let all ponder and seriously consider, that are become concerned and

1 Cor. 9. 16.

are

are obliged in this weighty matter; for some betake themselves to farming, that are appointed to publick preaching, and cannot go out upon the work of the Ministry, because of the pressing cares of family-necessity; when as the Apostle saith, No man that warreth entangles himself with the affairs of this life: And if the Apostles thought it not reason and meet to leave the Word and Prayer, to serve tables, an office in the Churches, much more is it unreasonable for Gospel-Preachers to leave the work, to follow worldly occasions. I may say some have robbed their own families to spend their time in the Churches services; for much is already known, and much more is feared and foreseen, of the great inconveniencies that attend this business as naturall consequences.

2 Tim. 2. 4.

5. The bad and sad effects that accompany the neglect of it. 'Tis to be feared that some that have been eminent in the Ministry, have declined the way of truth and verity, being under temptations, for want of supplyes necessary. In the former dispensation, when the people detained the Lords servants right, the Lord charged them that they robbed him, and for that he would come

come as a ſwift witneſs a-
gainſt them: If the Scrip- *Mal.* 8. 3.
ture ſaith 'tis even ſo in the
duty, we may juſtly fear it may be even ſo
in the penalty. If the keeping
back the labourers wages, cryes *Jam.* 5. 4.
in the ears of the Lord of Sab-
bath, ſhall not we fear if we neglect ſuch as
faithfully and painfully labour in the Word
and Miniſtry. My dearly beloved Brethren,
let theſe things be pondered; I do not
charge you but warn you, and in diſcharge
of my own duty, and to give you notice to
eſcape the danger of the penalty; for there
is a neglect, and it will be charged ſome-
where; let every man do his duty according
to his meaſure. This then is the great
ſtrait, that either the work of the Lord muſt
be neglected, or that which properly be-
longs to wife and children, muſt be waſted.
'Tis not the mind, neither is it for Gods
honour, that one ſervant ſhould be oppreſ-
ſed and another eaſed; and whether the
Lord may not reckon for eſtates decayed,
bodies waſted, ſpirits and bloud ſpent and
not regarded, as well as conſciences oppreſt
and bodies deſtroyed. This is the ſtrait be-
twixt two, either to neglect the worthy
work of the Goſpell, or elſe to be in dan-
ger

ger of being reputed worse than an Infidell. Moreover besides all this; 'tis more than hard to obtain a succession of Ministers, because 'tis foreseen and known the Church makes no provisions: And these things I have not only by intelligence, but by sad and known experience.

6. There are some circumstances to consider, touching and relating to this matter. Let none be mistaken or deceived, as to think that I plead for particular persons, or private interest; not that I desire a gift, or that it should be so done to me: For I thought I might speak the more freely, because I have not been chargeable to any, no otherwise than in common entertainments; nay if need be I can give testimony, that I have refused when it hath been tendred me. But I can assign more publick and better ends; as the preaching the Gospell, the conversion of sinners, the constituting and confirming of Churches, the convincing and improving gainsayers, the uniting Christians, the repairing breaches, and the establishing and setting in order the Congregations, and moreover, that fruit might abound upon the

Phil. 4. 17.

Tit. 1. 9.

Lords

Lords peoples account. There may be times and occasions that a man may abate of his due, and remit of his right: Some circumstances may require it, where the people have not ability, and when the Lords people may be in distress and necessity, whose conditions may call for more than ordinary supplyes: Such circumstances ought to be observed, notwithstanding it be a duty commanded. I speak not this that the Lords people should be burdened, nor any particular mans desire answered, but that every mans duty and conscience may be discharged, the Gospell preached, Ministers encouraged, and the work of God furthered and advanced.

7. An Exhortation to discharge your duties in these weighty businesses. God is not mocked; what a man sowes that he shall reap. Let not me be thought tedious, neither let this work be counted wearines: There is such great need the Gospell should be spread, and such great complaints for instruments, moves and presses me to be earnest to perswade to answer their expectations, and the Lords requirements. 1. Let the Lords Ministers see there be no default and neglect in them, neither to have a covetous desire 2 *Pet.* 5. 2.

after

afeer gain and filthy lucre; but freely to go out in the Lords name upon the Lords work, and chearfully cast themselves upon the Lords promises and providences, for their success and security. And let the Churches see that they neglect not their duty, as helps and assistants to them in the Ministry; for coyn and treasure is the sinews of warfare. Let every one help as he hath received, not one eased, and another over-burdened: Let this law be the rule and order, as you would have another do to you, do you in like manner to another. And whose heart the Lord hath enlarged towards this needfull work, let it be done chearfully and in charity, agreeable to principles of equallity, answerable to ability, and consonant to rules of equity, for all receits must be accounted, for we are but Stewards of that we are possest, for the earth is the Lords and all things therein, for we our selves are not our own, neither is any of our substance or coyn; bodies, goods, and spirits, are to glorifie him, for we are but tenants to the immortall and universall Lord, when he calls for our selves or substance to serve him, we ought to render up all to him; for every Christian

2 *Cor.* 3. 13, 14.

man

man the Lord hath made ſtewards of a worldly poſſeſſion, ſtands obliged with this Rent-charge, by vertue of Religion; beſides thoſe of his family, to communicate to the poor ſaints, and ſuch as labour in the Miniſtry. Beloved brethren, I can do no leſs but caution you againſt covetouſneſs, which is ſo deſtructive to piety, and which the Apoſtle calls Idolatry, which eſpecially conſiſts of two generall parts, either an unlawfull getting and poſſeſſing, or an unjuſt with-holding and detaining that from another, of which he is the true owner, eſpecially when his neceſſity calls for it ſpeedily. Beware then of detaining any dues from the Lord when he calls for it, even that which he hath reſerved and excepted for the poor Saints, and his miniſtring ſervants, which belongs to them, as given from the Lord, and proved to be their right by his Word. My dearly beloved brethren, let not me be thought the worſe, although I preſent you with this diſcourſe. I hope you will excuſe and pardon my boldneſs and plainneſs, becauſe 'tis a publick good, and an univerſall cauſe, even a deſign to advance the honour of God, and for poor ſouls ſpiritual and eternall good. Let every man help as he hath received, and as he ſtands obliged, whether it be in reſpect of ſpiritualls or temporalls: *Col.* 3. 5.

The wiſe man with his wiſdome; the gifted man by exhortation; the rich man with his treaſures; all help together by their hearty and fervent prayers. He that giveth let him do it with ſingleneſs; he that ruleth, with diligence; and he that ſheweth mercy, with chearfullneſs, for the Lord loves a chearfull giver. Take one reaſon more: When many ſhoulders are ſet to bear a heavy weight, it cauſes each mans burden to become very light; and as Goſpell Preachers ought to be tender in being chargeable to the Churches, ſo ought Churches not to make the Goſpell burdenſome to the Preachers. Let Chriſtians comply and agree together, as *Joab* and *Abiſhai* did, to maintain a temporall warre; *Joab* ſaid to his brother, *If the enemy be too ſtrong for me, thou ſhalt help me, if he be too ſtrong for thee, I will help thee*: So ought brethren to do who are engaged in the cauſe of Chriſt, to aſſiſt each other in all ſpirituall combats, and to help to bear one anothers burdens, for this is to fulfill the royall Law of Chriſt. But to be ſhort and plain; my brethren, I am not without my fear, leſt we ſhould provoke the Lords diſpleaſure, even to blaſt our bleſſings, and diſpoſſeſs us of our freedomes, becauſe he hath done ſo much for us,

Rom. 12. 8.

Gal. 6. 2.

us, and we have done so little for others; being subject to forget we ought to be lights to the world, and *Mat.* 5. 13, 14. salt to the earth; and because we have not such sympathizing dispositions, and compassionate hearts, to pitty the dark condition of the world, and ignorant estate of poor sinners, even while we hear them calling upon us in severall places, as it were complaining for want, and calling out for help, and asking relief for their poor souls. Let Churches therefore set out their lights, and every one add their helps, some as actuall instruments, others as instrumentall assistants, that the Gospell may be published, unregenerate persons converted, and hungry and thirsty souls may be supplyed and refreshed. I will take leave to adde one thing more which I have observed: That our Christian relations come short of some other perswasions, who when they depart this world possest of temporall wealth, bequeath part to some pious and publick services; and this part of their charity as it were perfumes their memory, and like *Abels* faith and sacrifice will speak and (in a sence) preach after a man dyes. If ye believe this concerns you, consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

Object. But we are unable and cannot give be-

cause of our families, and many other expences, payments, and charges.

Answ. The husbandman that laboureth, must first be partaker and receive of the fruits. Ought not Christians first to advance the kingdome of God, and pay their first fruits to their supreme Lord. Let the Objection be thus resolved; that the interest of Christ and the cause of souls shall be first preferred. If you cannot give talents, yet cast in your mites into the common treasury, for it will be accepted according to what a man hath, if it be done chearfully. Take heed my brethren of distrusting or murmuring at free disbursing to Gospell-Preaching; he that thus expends his treasure lends to the Lord, and the Lord will not forget but requite them an hundred fold. Who knows but the Lord intends to tempt you to prove him, as in the Prophet *Malachies* time, when he said, *If you will bring meat into my store-house, see if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out blessings without measure, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.* Who knows but that for a little expended, there may be much received: But I leave it to the wise for them to apply and Gospellize. *To do good and com-*

2 *Tim.* 2. 6.

Heb. 6. 10.

Heb. 13. 16.

municate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased, and the sacrificer shall be well rewarded.

And if in this small Tract any thing that pertains to this present Subject, hath either slipt my memory, or hath been above my capacity, that hath or may arise as a question in Christs Congregation, I not knowing what particular thing, I will give this generall resolution: That when two things or two wayes shall arise in debate, and one of them is doubtfull and the other is safe, then in such a case, to chuse the way that is safe, alwayes designing and pursuing after the things *Rom.*14.19. that make for peace.

Thus I have briefly declared and freely tendered my judgement and opinion, in my own plain stile, and according to my own understanding: It hath also been my care to avoid occasions of offences and grounds of disputations; and withall I have endeavoured to free my self from detraction and derogation of any mans person, office, or perswasion, it being much contrary to my disposition; yet this I know, what of truth I have written, bears its opposition to all that oppose it, whether they speak evill of it, or come short of it, or act contrary to it, or depart from it, it stands in its own defence. If yet notwithstanding my

respect to dissenting and differing brethren, and tenderness to others, any
1 *Cor.* 11. 16. man shall carp and be contentious, their end will be the better discovered; let them know we have no such custome, nor the Churches of God.

To conclude all, I give this Admonition, Caution, and Encouragement, touching the exercise of right discipline and righteous government; that ye call to memory the danger of the curse, threatned against such as do the work of the Lord negligently, or deceitfully, and sloathfully, witness old *Ely*, for reproving too lightly, and *Saul* for executing judgement deceitfully, and that wicked sloathfull person, who neglected to improve his talent faithfully, for his negligence and remisness, is sentenced to be bound hand and foot,
Mat. 25. 26, 30. and cast into utter darkness. Moreover *Judas* for deceit and treachery, and *Demas* for turning from the truth to idolatry: Besides in the time of the Prophet *Malachy*, the Lord blames the people for dealing deceitfully, detaining from his servants their right of propriety, by which his service should be performed, his servants maintained, and the poor relieved: The Lord is pleased to define the sin, and calls it robbery and injustice, he repayes the evill with a curse

of

of penury. And as all Scripture is recorded for our learning and inſtruction, ſo theſe preſidents of miſcarriages and puniſhments, are become our premonitions and warnings, that by preventing the ſins, we may clearly eſcape the puniſhments. Thus much be ſpoken touching the Caution and Admonition.

Laſtly, A word of Encouragement, and ſo I have done: I am of St. *Peters* perſwaſion, to put you in remembrance of theſe things, although ye know them, and be eſtabliſhed in them; but to obſerve the ſpeciall notice the Lord takes, and countenance he manifeſts, to ſuch as are juſt and righteous, as *Noah*, *Lot*, and *Phineas*, *Caleb*, *Joſhua*, and many others, who for their integrity, fidelity, and ſingularity, are bleſt with ſpeciall ſecurity, that while others fall under judgement and miſery, as a demonſtration, the Lord records their names, commends their actions, ſecures their perſons, and comprehends in the bleſſing their poſteries and families. The Prophet *Jeremiah* ſpeaking in commendations of *Joſiah* King of *Judah*, ſaid thus of him, that he did execute judgement and juſtice, and then it was well with him; this is rightly to know God; *Was not this to know me, ſaith the Lord.* Theſe that were men of juſtice and faithfulneſs, the Lord *Jer.*22 15,16.

counts it unto them for righteousness. *John* the *Baptist* was a righteous man, and faithfull and just in reproving sin, and so obtained this commendation to be called a just and holy man. Also the Lord was pleased greatly to honour *Abraham*, in making him privy to his design of justice upon *Sodom*, and admits him to parle touching their destruction; the Lord gives this character of him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and like a man of government, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement. The Lord doth so highly account and so much delight in truth and judgement, that if there were but one man found in the City *Jerusalem*, to seek for it, and in the execution of it, notwithstanding a wicked City, he would pardon it: The Lord takes such pleasure in justice, that he prefers it above other sacrifice, for it is the habitation of his holiness.

Gen. 18. 19.

Jer. 5. 1.

Finally, The benefits that attend such as give Christs servants their due encouragements. If I may take leave once again to look back into the Old Testament Mapp, recorded in the Propheſie of *Malachy*, I will shew you a three-fold blessing that attends this duty. 1. The Lord invites and tempts them to do their

their duty. 2. He is pleaſed to promiſe upon doing their duty, he will pour out bleſſings, and that abundantly for their ſakes. 3. He will remove the curſe, ſtop the deſtroyer, reprove the conſumer, and rebuke the devourer. 4. The Lord will ſo raiſe their fame and commendations, that they ſhall be called a bleſſed people, and that by all Nations. In my making uſe of Old Teſtament Scriptures, 'tis not to make it our rule, but to make uſe of their concurrences and aſſiſtances, for they may in ſome meaſure help us as mapps and glaſſes to diſcover our duties, and to ſee our dangers. For as in the Goſpell dayes, duties are more richly and rarely bleſſed, ſo new teſtaments, neglects, and contempts, are more ſorely and dreadfully puniſht. *Heb.* 10. 28, 29. Thus I have as it were ſet ſome Land-marks to guide you in the way to felicity, and alſo diſcovered ſome Sea-marks to avoid the rocks of miſery; and having thus born my teſtimony, I commend you all to God, and wiſh you eternall manſions of glory.

FINIS.

POSTSCRIPT.

NOw if any Brother or Well-wisher shall conscientiously doubt or be dis-satisfied, touching any particular Point contained in this Treatise, because of my speaking to many things in a little room: And if he or they shall be serious in so doing, and will be-friend me so far, and do me that courtesie, to send to me, before they condemn me, and let me know their scruples in a few words of writing, I shall look upon my self obliged both in affection and reason, to endeavour to give them full satisfaction.

FINIS.

A Table of the principall Matters contained in this Book.

CHAP. I.

THe Cauſes of peace and proſperity in the Churches of Jeſus Chriſt. page 1,2.
The antiquity and dignity of Church-Government. p.3.
The perſonall and princely Excellencies in Chriſt, as the head of his Church. p.6.
Chap. 2. Shewing the definition of Church-Government in New Teſtament dayes, *viz.* in not inflicting bodily puniſhment upon offenders, but ſpiritually executing Laws without knowing faces, reſpecting perſons, wreſting cauſes, either for favour or prejudice to any perſons. p.8
A true Miniſters moſt ſpeciall work and duty to the flock under all circumſtances, laid down. p.11,12.
Chap. 3. Shewing the neceſſity of and reaſons for Church-Governours and Governments. p.12,13.
Chap. 4. Shewing the good uſe and great benefit that comes by right Government. p.19.
Right Government is deſtructive to iniquity, and

and a protection to piety. p.22,23.
Chap.5. Rules tendred to accomplish a right Government, and the manner how to choose their Officers. p.26.27.
The work of the Officers when chosen. p.28,29,30.
Chap.6. Shewing the duty of Christians, as they stand related to civill Magistrates, requiring civill subjection, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake. p.38.
Chap.7. Treating of Family duties, Superiours to Inferiours, and Inferiours to Superiours, with Directions to a religious choice in Yoke-fellows. p.40,41,&c.
Chap.8. Treating particularly of Family duties. p.51.
Chap.9. Treating of private and personall Government. p.56.
Cautions not to grieve Gods Spirit, nor offend Conscience. p.61.
Rules for the heart, mouth, eyes, and ears. p.65,&c.
Chap.10. Shewing the true order and right manner of executing Church-Government, in seven Rules. p.73,74.
Chap.11. Treating of restitution to be made by an offender. p.76.
Concerning dealing with Hereticks, and other offenders. p.77,78.

Chap.

Chap. 12. Rules of Diſcipline how to treat an offender in orderlyeſt wayes; how to reſtore him. p. 80.
Rules of better obſervation of the Lords Day, or First Day Sabbath. p. 83.
Rules for Admonition of penitent perſons after Excommunication. p. 87.
Chap. 13. Shewing what Priviledges are to be maintained to Officers, and Members in Chriſts Congregation. p. 88, &c.
Chap. 14. Shewing what Diſorders ought to be prevented, corrected, or removed. p. 95.
Rules how the offended ought to treat the offending Brother. p. 97, &c.
Seven Deſcriptions of the nature of the Devil, the Churches adverſary, by his names. p. 102.
Chap. 15. Shewing what Branches of injuſtice and oppreſſion are to be avoided in the puniſhment of ſin. p. 103.
Chap. 16. Shewing the true order and the execution of Diſcipline and Juſtice. p. 105.
Rules to ſet out the ugly nature of ſin in its aggravations, to the thorow humbling the offender. p. 109.
Uſefull Directions for the promoting and preſerving unity and peace in the Churches of Chriſt. p. 112, 113, &c.
Chap. 17. Giving Directions how to uphold and

and preserve Church-Government.
p.115 &c.
Chap.18. Shewing the duty of particular Elders over particular Churches. p.119.to 124.
Chap. 19. Shewing the Office and Duty of Deacons in Christs Congregations.
p.124.to 129.
Chap.20. Shewing the Duty of Church-members to their Officers. p.129,130,&c.
A Duty incumbent and of high concern for Churches to present humble, frequent, and fervent prayers, for such as are called to be Gospell-Governours, that they may rule for God in justice and righteousnes, and for the encrease of faithfull Labourers in his harvest. p.132,to135.
Chap.21. Shewing what God hath ordained respecting his Ministers Maintenance.
p.135,136,&c.
The Necessity of making carefull and sutable provision for the Ministry, with the sad effects that accompany the contrary.
p.139,140,&c.
Encouragements to this work, shewing the advantages that attend the due performance of it. p.143,144,&c.
Counsell to forwardnes in assisting the Ministry with our worldly possessions: Also a Caution

Caution againſt Covetonſneſs, deſcribing what it is. p.145,146.
Objections againſt this needfull work anſwered. p.148.
A generall reſolution in all difficult and doubtfull Caſes. p.149.
The dreadfull conſeqences in Miniſter and People, to do the work of the Lord negligently, with comfortable Encouragements to conſtant diligence. p.150,151,152,&c.